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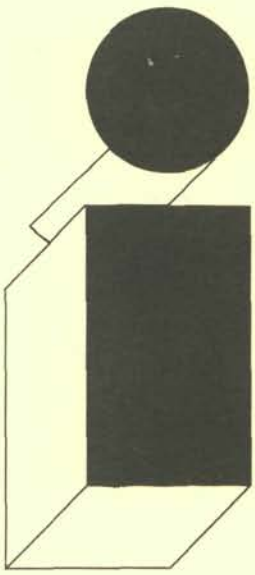

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This year, 1982, marks the fiftieth anniversary of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR. The journal was founded in 1932 during the bleakest days of the worst depression this country has ever known; and its founding, by Phi Beta Kappa, marks an act of extraordinary optimism and generosity. Phi Beta Kappa set out to form and sponsor a journal that would discuss serious things in a serious way. Through Phi Beta Kappa's continued support, THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR has become the largest-circulation intellectual quarterly in the United States. At a time when journals large and small are everywhere dying out, ours continues to survive and even, in a modest way, to thrive.

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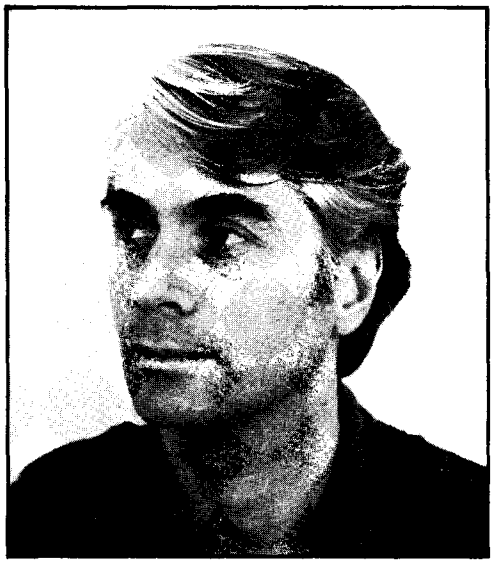

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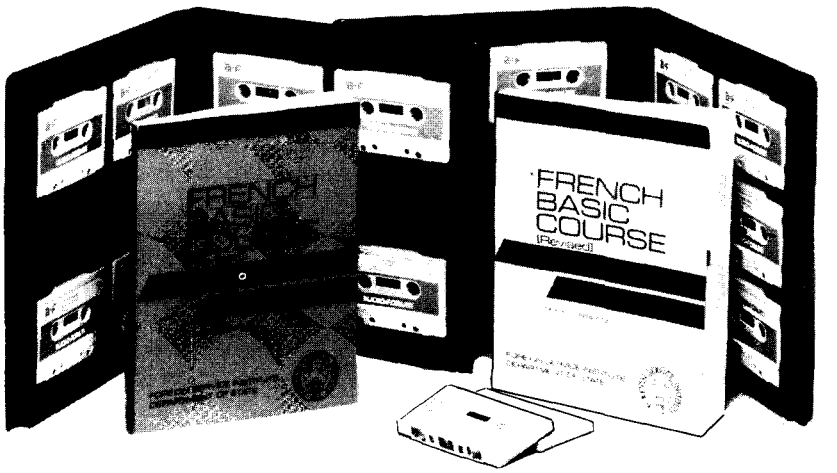

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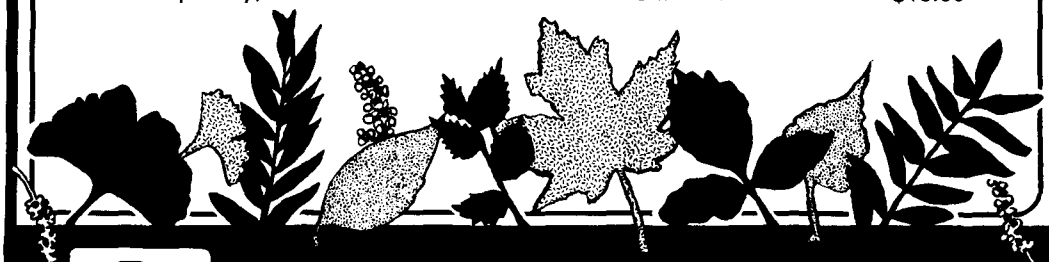

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Has the Future a Future?

ARISTIDES

The future worries me a little, and when it's not worrying me a little, it bores me quite a lot. After all, I (we) know how I (we) shall end. Still, curiosity about what will occur between now and then does from time to time raise its impish head. I read the tags that come with my fortune cookies as raptly as the next fellow. "Your enterprise," a recent one of mine read, "will bring great profit." This is comforting, but all the same I should prefer to see some dates and figures. Cookie prophecy notwithstanding, I foresee no great reversal of fortune in my case, unless it be dramatically downward and outward. Can this relative lack of interest in the future reflect the fact that, yes, I rather like my life as it is now, and, no, I cannot see the future doing anything but altering that life for the worse?

Do we think most about the future when we are unhappy with the present? I am inclined to think we do. While being beaten by life, most of us—except those who happen to be true masochists—tend to think between lashes how sweet things will be once the beating stops. The future, for those who dream longingly of it, is always that time when the beating will have stopped. Perhaps I have not taken enough blows from life, for dwelling on the future has never been my idea of a very good time. Not, I hasten to add, that I live completely in the present. As I grow older, I seem to spend more and more time in the past, running home movies in my mind of old friends, fine times, and, as I now like to imagine them, uncomplicated and sunny days. Only rarely does my mind lurch into the future where I can be found as the subject of charming slides. *Click:* there I am on the White House lawn receiving a medal for distinguished service to literature. *Click:* and there, that elegantly turned out white-haired gentleman, strolling along a white-sand beach, that's me. *Click:* there I am again, in the toy department, buying a doll for the extremely well-mannered child (my beautiful granddaughter, of course) who is holding my hand.

Yet these little slide show glimpses into the shiny future do not long detain me. Reality obtrudes. The possible reverses of these daydreams—daymares, might they be called?—pop up all too readily. Instead of receiving a medal, I receive a letter from a publisher rejecting a manuscript and making clear, despite perfunctory attempts at politeness, that I am professionally a back number whose scribblings are no longer wanted. Instead of maundering down a foreign beach, I see myself, in rumpled pajamas and robe, tottering down a hospital corridor doing what I think of as the prostate shuffle. And instead of that bright well-behaved granddaughter holding my hand, I see the knuckles of my hand white with suppressed rage at a grandchild brought up in a spirit of complete permissiveness crying for designer jeans. Here, I feel, I have seen the future, and it's terrible.

Joubert said that "the charm we are most sensible to is the charm of the future, and not the charm of the past." But Joubert wrote at the end of the eighteenth century and into the early nineteenth century; since then optimism, for most of us, has shifted from the future to the past. The past seems rosy, the future gray. The present, to keep this in technicolor, seems for many people to be black. I do not know how many share this general outlook, but I was recently interested to read, in an essay by Edward Shils entitled "The Intellectuals and the Future," that these views have something of a tradition. In this tradition the present, as Professor Shils puts

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it, "is not the best of times but the worst of times," and the future is "even more the worst of times, a season of darkness, a winter of despair." So there you have them, the present and the future, the worst of times and the even more worst of times.

It has not always been thus, and indeed a loss of belief in the future implies no less than a loss of belief in progress. Even socialists, Marxists, and revolutionaries seem to have lost their belief in the future; the old shibboleths come rolling off their lips, but it is as if they cannot keep the scales from dropping from their eyes. Most Saturday mornings, outside my neighborhood bank, young Trotskyists hawk their sect's newspaper to passersby. I don't like to pass the lads without a word of encouragement. The last time I banked of a Saturday morning, I said to one of them, "The revolution is coming, my boy, it's coming." "Whaddaya," he replied, "a wise guy?"

"While the twentieth century is far from barren of faith in progress," Robert Nisbet writes in his *History of the Idea of Progress*, "there is nevertheless good reason for supposing that when the identity of our century is eventually fixed by historians, not faith but abandonment of faith in the idea of progress will be one of the major attributes." This sounds to me persuasive. Certainly it jibes with everything currently in the intellectual atmosphere. Among novelists, statesmen, social scientists, and columnists the consensus seems to be that we are headed for that sad, bad destination, "the dogs." As Valéry once put it, "The future isn't what it used to be." Or, to reverse a charmingly klutzy tautology made famous by the sportscaster Curt Gowdy, who used to say of young athletes that "their whole future is ahead of them"—where else, after all, could it be?—our future, alas, appears to be behind us.

Or is it appearance merely?

One has, I think, to allow not only for the distorting perspective of the age but also for the equally distorting perspective of one's own age. Henry James somewhere speaks of "the futurity of youth," by which he meant that it is in the nature of the young to be future-minded: to have a head full of plans and a heart full of hope. It is partly because of their sense of futurity that it is splendid to be around the young; it is partly because of their sense of futurity, too, that one can't stand to be around them for too long. One listens to the young prattle on about their tomorrows, and it is difficult to repress a knowing smile or to expunge the condescension from one's voice. The knowing smile, the condescension are there because the young only rarely know what life likes to do to plans. Another of the things they do not know, though all but the permanently immature among them will discover it, is that paradise does not lie in the future but in the past, "since the true paradises are the paradises we have lost." The usual prize of ten guineas for the name of the writer who said that.

Proust said it, and about such matters the little porcelain psychologist, as one of the ladies from the Faubourg Saint-Germain called him, was seldom wrong. About paradises lost, Marcel Proust knew more even than John Milton, and one of the things Proust knew was the propensity in all of us to suffuse our past with soft colors and sweet harmonies. When I was in the army—I spent two full years of peacetime in the scenic states of Missouri, Texas, and Arkansas—I lay abed at night vowing that one thing I would never do was look back on this experience, as many people told me I one day would, as interesting, valuable, and extremely funny. Twenty-odd years later I now look back on the experience of having been in the army as interesting, valuable, and extremely funny. Another broken vow.

Now I do not wish to claim—nor have I ever been accused of possessing—superior perspective, but as I grow older the past seems better and better. Why? Is it, in my case, part of the regular disillusionment of middle age with the future? How naturally a conservatism of temperament seems to set in! Ought it to be fought against, when even the most radical-minded seem to feel it? In *Misia*, Arthur Gold and Robert Fizdale, the biographers of Misia Sert, note about Misia and Sergei Diaghilev that in their fifties these two connoisseurs and devotees of the new in art underwent a flagging of energy, a nagging suspicion "that life had been more beautiful, that art had been greater." The problem, though, was not altogether one of age; the artists of Misia Sert and Diaghilev's earlier years—among them Mallarmé, Stravinsky, Proust, Renoir, and Toulouse-Lautrec—*were* better than those who followed. Is it not possible that one's own

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earlier years were, similarly, better? Or is it instead only that they seem better because one was then young?

"No wise man," said Swift, "ever wished to be younger." That may be true, but even if it is, it doesn't mean that many of us do not wish to have the conditions, if not the actual fact, of our youth restored. I want to smell burning leaves in autumn again; I want shrimps and clams and oysters to be inexpensive again; I want again to be able to return home late at night without thinking about the danger of being mugged. "Ah," someone playing the progressivist's advocate might chime in here, "I suppose you also want pollution again; cheap labor again; heedlessness for civil liberties and general intolerance to prevail again."

Nope, *M. Avocat*, I would reply, I wish none of these things. You see the years of my youth, the 1950s, as an age of stifling conformity; I see them as a time when intellectual considerations were still taken seriously. You see them as a time when the experimental spirit was held in check; I see them as the last time in the United States when the ideal was not to remain in a perpetual state of youthfulness but to become an adult. You, friend, see progress as worth the price; I often don't even see it as progress. Our differences are fundamental, possibly irreconcilable, and since this is my essay, not yours, I have a good mind to tell you to scram, which I shall do presently, but I need you for a moment longer to accuse me of nostalgia.

Well, I am not sure whether I am a practitioner or a victim of nostalgia. Nor am I altogether certain that this hunger for the past I sometimes feel is exactly nostalgia. Nostalgia has been called the rust of memory, and Robert Nisbet has said that its effect "is to divest us of the sense of history and to make of the past a cornucopia of idle anodynes and feeble pleasures." I prefer to think of myself less as nostalgic than as yearning for tradition, and it is tradition that I see as the victim of our own day's unslakable thirst for the young and the new. "The very function of tradition," Nisbet writes, "is to bind past, present and future into one, to stimulate hope in and desire to work toward the future through commemoration of the past and its extension into the present." This seems to me wise; it also seems to me to go a long way toward explaining why the future can so often appear dreary, the present dim.

As Gertrude Stein once said of the city of Oakland that there was "no there there," so of our own day it too often seems as if there is no now now. In saying this I realize I am far from speaking for everyone. People there are, and great is their number, who find a great deal of now now and who, looking to the future, expect to find plenty of then then. Yet another of the divisions of humankind is that between people who greet the future with open arms and people who refuse even to answer the bell for it. Of the latter camp was Charles Lamb, of whom his friend William Hazlitt wrote: "Mr. Lamb has a distaste to new faces, to new books, to new buildings, to new customs. . . . He evades the present, he mocks the future. His affections revert to, and settle on the past, but then, even this must have something personal and local in it to interest him deeply and thoroughly." Compare with this Mr. Lincoln Steffens, who saw the future and thought (incorrectly, as we now know) that it worked.

If infatuation with change be the key, I am more like Charles Lamb than not. I tend, decidedly, to resist change; worse, I am afraid, I greet news of innovations malfunctioning with barely suppressed glee. When I learn that the computers are "down," or that someone's Betamax has gone on the fritz, a little mariachi band begins to play in my heart. I have not yet advanced to the position on change of a dear friend, who of himself says, "I never eat in a restaurant I haven't eaten in before, I never read a book I haven't read before, and I try never to write or say anything I haven't already written or said before." Still, wherever possible, I try to go against the flow. I live in an older building, write with a fountain pen, sleep in pajamas. If there were more people like me, I recognize, we might still be on horseback. Or, I hear some future-minded heckler cry out, without indoor plumbing.

Don't get me wrong: opposed though I may be to change, I adore convenience. I also accept the possibility of progress, though I think one does well to be selective about it. (I should not, for example, go so far as a mortician in my city who has named his establishment the Progressive Funeral Home.) Progress, in my view, has not been as undi-

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luted as many of its adherents like to think. It has been indisputable in medicine but highly disputable in education; clear in technology but murky in ethics. Yet even here agreement is likely to be far from universal. Beyond anesthesiology, some might contend, less medicine is better medicine; and others might argue quite the reverse of education, maintaining that, though the quality of education may have slipped, having so many more people going to school longer constitutes real progress. Complex stuff, all this, and not made simpler by the knowledge that scarcely any progress nowadays comes unaccompanied by unexpected drawbacks: one step forward, three steps back. Perhaps the only uncontested progress in my lifetime has been in the manufacture of tennis shoes.

When it comes to thinking about the future, the Reverend Sydney Smith's advice for avoiding depression may make good sense: "Short views of human life—not further than dinner or tea." Sydney Smith also advised slightly cold showers and good blazing fires. I would add the advice never to read the futurologists, those men and women whose job it is to predict the future on the basis of the present. You can usually count on them for bad news; you can also usually count on them to be wrong. Thus one such report, "The Global 2000 Report," issued in July 1980, spoke bleakly of our using up the earth's resources, leveling forests, eroding soil, overcrowding cities, wasting fuels. Chock-full of intimation of bad new days ahead, the report had us going downhill, down the drain, down the tubes. Then, not even two years later, a number of critics have come forth to dispute separate portions of "The Global 2000 Report." Economic output and food production are now expected to exceed population growth; gloomy energy prognostications have been discovered to be off by 30 percent; deforestation turns out to be proceeding at half the rate claimed in the report. Now, dependably, the pendulum has swung the other way, and a man named Julian Simon, professor of business and economics at the University of Illinois, insists that things have never looked better. Everything, in his view, is looking up, up, indefinitely up. Who knows the truth? The futurologists remind me of Sydney Smith's cold showers and good blazing fires; it might be the best idea first to soak all futurological reports in the former and then to burn them in the latter.

Am I alone, I wonder, in never having lost a moment's sleep over the rate of deforestation or the world's population growth? In the end, I must say, it is not food production or energy consumption that much affects my view of the future. Maybe it ought to—but it doesn't. True, hearing one piece of global bad news after another does not exactly bring forth a glow in one's complexion. Still, I have yet to toss and turn over soil erosion, or to wake screaming that something must be done about replenishing marine life. Maybe I ought to—but I haven't.

It is not, I suspect, the approaching ice age or the draining of the seas that depresses most of us; it is the little things. I do not wish to air my dirty linen in public, but may I talk a bit about my shirt problem? They seem, my shirts, in a fairly short time to have gone in price from roughly five dollars to roughly thirty dollars each. But that is not what has me down. What troubles me more is getting them properly laundered. To do so has become costly—one dollar a shirt—and even at that price they are not very carefully done. Shirts come back with buttons missing, a sleeve unironed, a deep crease running across the front. Meanwhile strong detergents—do the laundries use a dollop of nitroglycerin, I wonder?—help to shorten the life of shirts. The last time I had my shirts done well was when a Chinese man and woman, working out of the back of their shop, did them. Since this couple's retirement, the larger the laundry I have sent my shirts to, the worse they have come back. This is not a catastrophe; I am not planning to put in for a disaster loan to get my shirts laundered. It's only a bit depressing, and what is most depressing about it is the fact, all too clear, that nobody either knows or cares enough to launder a shirt. It doesn't seem likely to get better. Can I look forward to a future in which I shall wear plastic shirts, or, simpler still, paper shirts that, like the new diapers, are disposable?

What is depressing about this, too, is the signals it gives off. One of these is that there is less competence in the world. The world has always been filled with less than gratifying jobs, and laundering shirts is doubtless among them. But somehow these jobs got done. They get done no longer, or at any rate no longer

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with the competence required for daily living. Competence itself seems almost to have disappeared. So pervasive has incompetence become that one begins to believe in a conspiracy theory: the bunglers are out to get us. High and low, bungling exists everywhere—the button missing from the cuff, the helicopter breaking down in the desert, the book bristling with typographical errors—so that any show of competence, any concern for efficiency, leaves one stupified. The other day, for example, General Electric's service department promised to send a repairman out to fix an appliance, saying that he would arrive sometime before noon. When he arrived at eleven o'clock on the appointed morning, I felt he must have been an impostor.

On a recent visit to the Barclay Hotel in New York—single room: $110—I was met by a very decent young man at the reception desk, who, with the aid of a small computer terminal, sent me to a dark room next to an elevator and overlooking an air shaft. I returned to the reception desk, suitcase in hand, to ask: "Sir, when you punched the keys of that machine, did the board light up with the message, 'Give this guy a terrible room?' " "I don't understand, sir," he said, genuinely perplexed. I explained; he apologized; he tapped the keys of his machine again, and I was sent off to my new room. It had good light but two broken beds, upon one of which sat a broken dresser. Was I expecting too much for a mere $110 a night? Did rooms with beds in good repair begin at $150? I called down to the desk to ask if this were in fact the case. More apologies, and a promise that a bellman would be up in five minutes to take me to yet another room. And, lo, only forty minutes later, just before the large vein in my neck was about to burst, there he was. If the Barclay needs me, I am available for testimonials.

I don't think this story is so shocking. What is shocking, though, is that it isn't shocking. My guess is that nearly everyone has a story like it—a tale of being overcharged and underserved. I stress overcharged because I don't think money is at the heart of the competence problem. Every time the post office raises its rates, the quality of its service slips a notch further. Patience for details has departed; tolerance for the tough job has diminished. Surgeons sew up patients and neglect to remove an instrument. A university press misspells the author's name on his book's title page. If such foul-ups go on at fairly high levels, why shouldn't they be quite as frequent lower down—indeed, rather more frequent. I don't have a handy explanation for why there seems to be less competence at every level of life. People, plainly, have ceased to give a damn—or at least enough people have done so to encourage a feeling of hopelessness in the general population.

Having produced this litany of complaints, it occurs to me—in my thirty-odd-dollar shirts and from my one-hundred-odd-dollar-a-night hotel rooms—that I am not a strong candidate for pity. Trotting out these complaints (ravings?), I feel rather like a middle-aged fogy, or, if you prefer, a young curmudgeon. Bemoaning the loss of better days, after all, is almost standard practice. Doing so myself I feel like the lumpish man in the Jack Ziegler cartoon who is standing before the railroad schedule board that reads, on the left:

ARRIVALS

Pestilence	4:02
Famine	4:15
Martial Law	4:21
Triple Locks	5:00
Unemployment	5:20
Inflation	5:32
Shorter Summers	5:43
Longer Zip Codes	5:46
Plastic Silverware	6:01

and on the right:

DEPARTURES

Good Taste	3:32
Sleigh Rides	3:49
All-Beef Burgers	4:25
Happiness	5:11
Security	5:15
Friendly Loan Companies	5:58
Warm Blankets	6:10
Hardwood Floors	6:15
Homemade Ice Cream	6:31

In the Ziegler cartoon both lists, arrivals and departures, trail off, the further items becoming indecipherable. But each of us could add his own, *ad* nearly *infinitum*.

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Triple Locks is on Ziegler's arrivals list and Security is found under departures, and rightly so. Crime—its increase and, by now, pervasiveness—has done as much as anything over the past thirty years to foul the future. I grew up neither in the country nor in the suburbs, and ours was never one of those families that went to bed with its front and back doors unlocked, though I knew people who did not bother to lock their doors. Anyone who does so today ought rightly to be suspected of either an insurance scam or a suicide attempt. Fear of crime can, I suppose, be overdone; yet, under current conditions, paranoia seems to me the better part of valor. News that X has been mugged or Y's daughter has been raped is greeted with sadness but nowadays with no real shock. We wince, and put Mozart on the stereo. Murder can still get a rise out of the moral imagination, but of almost anything less we tend to say, "Well, that's the way we live now—that's the way it is." What we perhaps do not say is that it is probably the way we shall live for the foreseeable future. It is nearly unbearable to think about, and thus few of us bear to think about it. But it hovers in the dark, a mugger in the alley of our mind.

If the mugger in our mind represents the fear of violence and early death, modern life has added yet another fear to the arsenal of human horrors—that of living too long. I bring this up with some trepidation, for I myself, despite all my grumbling, rather like it here and am counting on semi-retirement at age ninety-six. Still, if a paradigm case of progress as a mixed blessing were wanted, none could be more stellar than the increase in the human life span. Most of us are grateful at the prospect of more years to live yet fearful of the prospect of spending them ill or alone or gaga. Modern life has supplied much of what, in the movies of the 1930s, used to be called "additional dialogue." One bit of such dialogue is a conversation in which husbands and wives must discuss whether, in a comatose state, they wish to live lashed to life-supporting machines. Do we, in the hideous current phrase, want them "to pull the plug"? Short of that, though, most of us are cheered at hearing reports of a man in his nineties "playing with a full deck," or a woman in her late eighties who has "retained all her marbles." Decks of cards? Marbles? The metaphors of old age do make it seem rather like game time. Perhaps each of us ought to assemble his own toy box now. I shouldn't mind it being said of me, "Ah, that Aristides, one hundred and two, and he's still got every Tinkertoy he started out with." Except by then there may be no one alive who ever heard of Tinkertoys.

Am I suffering future shock? Not having read the popular sociology book of that title, I am perhaps in no position to know. When I do think about the future, though, it does not so much shock as dismay me. I feel disappointed in it; I feel a sense of perturbation about it. I had hoped it would be better than it looks as if it is going to be. It isn't really what I had in mind. Much that I read of late—the novels of Saul Bellow and of Robert Stone, the memoirs of William Barrett, the travel writing of V. S. Naipaul—speaks to a great yet inchoate spiritual longing. I know what they are talking about. I understand this yearning. I cannot, however, accept spirituality in so inchoate a form; nor do I expect to have it made clearer to me. Perhaps I am a spiritually shallow person. I have only to enter a house of worship to experience a fierce longing—for a cigarette.

What is to be done? Keep, as the bumper stickers advise, on truckin'? Leonard Woolf, in the fifth volume of his autobiography, at age eighty-eight, looked back over fifty-seven years of political work he had done and concluded that "I must have in a long life ground through between one hundred and fifty thousand and two hundred thousand hours of perfectly useless work." But, Woolf writes:

> As I have said before, all through my life I have always believed and, I think, acted on the belief that there are two levels or grades of importance. *Sub specie aeternitatis*, in the eye of God or rather of the universe, nothing human is of the slightest importance; but in one's own personal life, in terms of humanity and human history and human society, certain things are of immense importance: human relations, happiness, truth, beauty or art, justice and mercy. That is why in his private and personal life a wise man would never take arms against a sea of troubles; he would suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, saying to himself: "These things are momentarily of terrible importance and yet tomorrow and eternally of no importance." And in a wider context, though all that I tried to do politically was completely futile and ineffective and unimportant, for me personally it was right and

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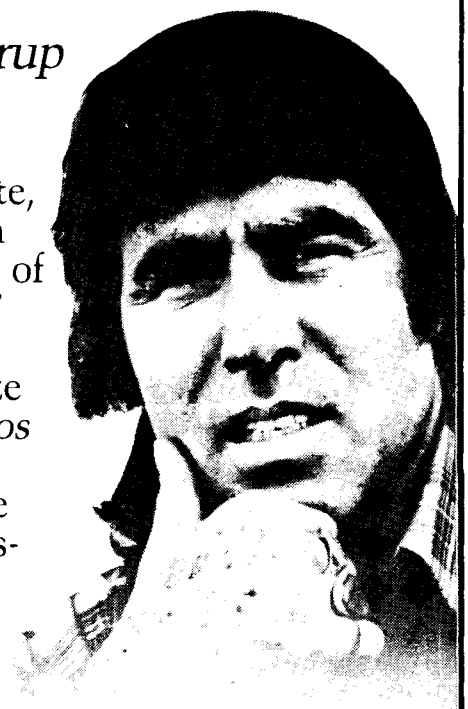

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important that I should do it, even though at the back of my mind I was well aware that it was ineffective and unimportant. To say this is to say that I agree with what Montaigne, the first civilized modern man, says somewhere: "It is not the arrival, it is the journey which matters."

If Montaigne and Leonard Woolf, two good men of very good sense, are correct in believing that it is the journey not the arrival that matters, it may well be that it behooves the rest of us not to ask too often or too insistently, "Is this trip necessary?" No refund is offered on the ticket in any case. Besides, along the way one is accompanied by family and friends, the pleasures of art and intellect, many minor delights, and sufficient ignorance—one's own and the world's—to keep one busy for the entire trip.

Obviously, one cannot live without planning for the future. But beyond planning of a fundamental kind—insurance, savings, a cemetery plot—the future, it may well be, does not repay too much thinking about. Thinking too much about the future resembles thinking too much about breathing—the result is to make one feel very uncomfortable. Best to glory in what was finest in the past, to concentrate on the present, and to allow the future to fend for itself. On the subject of the future, we would all do well to emulate the magazine *Next*, a journal billing itself as *The Magazine of the Future*; that worthy journal, it turns out, has recently suspended publication.

René Dubos

1901–1982

Contributing Editor, THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, *1971–1980*

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The University
A Backward Glance

EDWARD SHILS

FIFTY YEARS OF UNIVERSITIES! This just about corresponds to my own lifetime in universities. When I entered the University of Pennsylvania, except for Saturday afternoons in the autumn, the university was a quiet place, apart from the world. The teachers did their teaching as seriously as it was in their nature to do so; they told no jokes in their lectures. Some of them had written books and edited texts; only one of them had written a textbook, one had edited an anthology, none had compiled a book of "readings." They seemed to me to be a priesthood, rather uneven in their merits but uniform in their bearing; they never referred to anything personal. Some read from old lecture notes—one of them used to have to unroll the dog-eared lower corners of his foolscap manuscript and then haltingly decipher the thumb-worn last lines. Others lectured from cards that had served for years, to judge by the worn and furry edges, which were visible to students like myself who sat in the front of the lecture room. The teachers began on time, ended on time, and left the room without saying a word more to their students, very seldom being detained by questioners. There were about two or three lecturers who were admired by the middling and lower grade of student because they entertained the students by quips or eloquence or by personal references to their own experiences. They were the "characters" of the university.

Some of the students studied continuously; some, not always the same, read widely and continuously; some idled; and most did what was more or less the required minimum, took each course as seriously as they could without allowing it to interfere too much with their youthful pleasures, except for a few weeks or days before examinations. Almost all male students wore suits; all wore neckties. The students in the school of business administration wore well-pressed suits, and when they sat down they pulled up their trouser legs in order not to blunt the sharp creases.

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The more serious students—among whom I counted myself and a few of my friends—thought it was the duty of the teachers to do their work with passing conscientiousness. They all seemed to do this. I never heard it said that so and so had not prepared his lecture. Once one of the teachers delivered the wrong lecture—that is, a lecture for another course that he was teaching that term; he became aware of it about three-quarters of the way through, smiled in a sweetly sheepish way, and continued with the wrong lecture. But it was certainly a properly prepared lecture! Those who did research and who wrote books or scholarly or scientific papers were admired, but in a distant and detached way. No student expected to become friendly with his teachers, and the teachers took little personal interest in their students. I and almost all of my friends were commuters; we arrived between 8:00 and 9:00 A.M. and stayed until 10:30 or 11:00 P.M., mostly in the university library and, when not there, in the Horn and Hardart cafeteria across the street from the center of the campus. We occasionally saw our teachers in the library, but nothing more than a nod passed between us.

The classes were not large, yet there was no discussion. No questions were raised in class, and there were no office hours. Students were addressed—if they were addressed at all—by their surnames; no student, if asked his name, would answer "Bill" or "Jack" or whatever his intimates might call him. Few of the teachers had a room to themselves where they worked on their research; those who did made no arrangements to meet their students. I cannot recall ever having heard of a student who had been invited to the home of a teacher. Teachers lived in remote suburbs, mostly, I think, in the Main Line.

It all worked fairly well. The students did not complain about the distance between themselves and their teachers. The teachers kept to themselves and so did the students. There must have been neurotic students and dropouts among us, but I did not hear about them. The library was there and the laboratories were there and the museums were there. These were the places where those students who were interested in their subjects educated themselves. They read the journals, became acquainted or, in some cases, intimate with a wide range of literature, took copious notes, and prepared to write the papers that were required in almost all courses. Cranks like myself wrote very long and probably outrageous—and sometimes unsolicited—papers, which were graded with scarcely a comment, even when they received exceptionally high marks.

We never thought about Harvard or Columbia or Princeton. Nor did we feel inferior to them. We were not proud of our university. Nor were we ashamed of it. We were, of course, not ignorant of other universities.

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We, or at least I, knew of the works of professors elsewhere. I used to read Irving Babbitt, whom I definitely associated with Harvard. We knew of Whitehead at Harvard, Dewey at Columbia, Rostovtzeff, who had gone to Yale, Lancaster at Johns Hopkins, and so on. The fact that we did not have such eminent scholars at Pennsylvania never caused any of us to feel inferior. Each university was sui generis. We did not have any sense of a competition among universities, and I surmise that most of our teachers had none either.

We commuters—mostly Jews—never felt that we were outsiders. None of my friends ever thought that the distance between the teachers and ourselves had anything to do with anti-Semitism. The question did not arise. The teachers appeared to be just as distant from the Christian students.

II

When I came to the University of Chicago it was all rather different. There the teachers seldom lectured from old notes, although Professor Ogburn once read the wrong superscript of a statistical formula from an excessively used card. Questions during lectures were accepted. The more interested students flocked round the teacher at the end of the class, and the most interested or ambitious or sycophantic might walk with the teacher to his room and perhaps be invited in to sit down, surrounded by shelves full of books and amidst tables and chairs piled high with manuscripts and notes. Many of the teachers not only spent the whole day at the university but could also be found there in the evenings and even on Sundays. There were departmental student societies, and teachers sometimes joined them for dinner or attended their meetings.

The University of Chicago was a quiet place and a grave one as well. The country was well into the depression by then, and that had an additionally sobering effect. The students and the research assistants, of whom I was one, occasionally discussed politics—something we had never done at Pennsylvania despite our interest in political and social philosophy and European intellectual history and literature. But there were never any harsh discussions about politics.

At Chicago, the students were much more self-conscious about being at Chicago than we had ever been at Pennsylvania. Harvard, Columbia, California (Berkeley), and Yale were more on our minds. We were much more alert to the standing of the University; and since we were closer to the teachers, we could also sense that they were aware of the standing of their respective departments in the country.

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When I was a student at the University of Pennsylvania, its name never appeared in the newspapers except in connection with athletic events and games. There were some very good scientists at Pennsylvania in those days and at least one distinguished economist, but I cannot recall ever having seen their names in newspapers. Even magazines such as the *Nation* and the *New Republic* only rarely referred to universities. At Chicago it was quite different. For one thing, the president of the university was Robert Maynard Hutchins, a remarkably quick-witted, sharp-tongued, and handsome man, then in his early thirties and able to stir up—and enjoy stirring up—controversies.

The teaching at Chicago was more informal and sometimes more eccentric than it had been at Pennsylvania. The titles and substance of courses changed frequently; the teachers spoke from the heart of their research and reflection. With all the informality, however, the students were very deferential and seldom complained among themselves about their teachers. Even teachers who deserved to be were rarely criticized. Most of them had established reputations as scholars, but even those who had not were respected by the students as promising young men who would ascend to the heights once they reached the proper points of their careers. There were few lists of required reading and ample lists of suggested reading. Teachers often said in response to a query: "I often wonder about that," or "I can't answer that question."

Neither before nor after I ascended to the rank of instructor, from having been a research assistant, did I hear any of my colleagues speak of tenure. The verb *to tenure* and the adjective *tenured* had not yet come into common usage, partly because the older generation of social scientists was still not confident of its capacity to improve the English language, and partly because the idea of the university's fixed and permanent obligation to them had not yet appeared. My colleagues at Chicago, if they thought about it, never spoke about it. Each of us was glad just to have an appointment. For one thing, teaching at a university, and at the University of Chicago in particular, was thought by us to be a privilege. We did not think that we had been predestined for distinction, and having appointments—however lowly in the academic hierarchy, but so high by comparison with what the world generally seemed to offer—was a sufficient boon for us. I did not think that far into the future, anyway; nor did my friends at Chicago.

There was a vague sense of the hierarchy of universities, but it was not acutely felt. A person who had a doctorate from Chicago did not think that he was exiled from the Elysian Fields if he took a post at Vanderbilt or Utah. The hypersensitivity to rank, which is characteristic of the "anti-elitist" decades in which we are now living, had not yet appeared. Fifty

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years ago, our country and our universities were all too "elitist," according to the passionate conviction that, in the last two decades, has seized the intellectuals of this country. Yet fifty years ago it was not regarded as a mortification to be appointed to a university located somewhere else than "where the action is," to use another of the phrases of the egalitarian anti-elitists!

III

The professors at the University of Pennsylvania taught comprehensive courses for undergraduates and more specialized courses for seniors and graduate students. The former courses were given every year, the latter usually every other year. The specialized courses were taught by men who had specialized in the subjects of the courses, who had covered all the literature on them up until fairly recent years. I cannot recall any new courses except for those brought in by newly appointed professors or associate professors, and they were required to be on subjects well established in the field. There was no demand for innovation.

There is now. As a result, new courses proliferate, new subjects appear, especially in the social sciences and humanities where there is little corresponding growth of knowledge to necessitate them or to supply them with substance. There is nothing wrong with new courses. The mind does not stand still any more than does the stock of knowledge, and it is proper that students should benefit from these developments. It is desirable that a canon should be revised from time to time to accommodate genuine accomplishments in academic disciplines and, on rare occasions, to institute a new discipline. It also is desirable that a canon should exist, because there is a real hierarchy of works and genres, and students should not be made the victims of indiscriminately introduced novelties. A canon is, however, repugnant to the academic culture of the present day.

IV

One of the achievements of American universities at the end of the last century was the introduction of a departmental pattern of organization. Each department covered a discipline—or two if they were close to each other and if one or both were not sufficiently attractive or intellectually strong enough to justify building up a separate department. Each department had a chairman. To be a chairman was a distinction; it was regarded as an honor by the person who was selected for the position. His term was often of indefinite duration. A man could become known as

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a chairman, loved and respected or hated and feared. I never came across a case of a person who was offered the chairmanship and refused to accept it—although things being as they were, junior teachers and research assistants were not included in the circle of confidentiality. The chairman was appointed by the dean or the president and was usually, though not always, a relatively eminent scholar. He had great authority—he was listened to and obeyed. Some chairmen were imperious, some soft-mannered and considerate. In most universities, the chairman initiated and carried through appointments to his department in conjunction with the dean and the president. Sometimes he consulted all the other professors; sometimes he consulted only those who were in his confidence; sometimes he discussed a prospective appointment with the whole department. This was at his discretion. The situation did not always produce happy relations within the department, but at the University of Pennsylvania, and generally at Chicago as well, the students knew nothing of this. Academics tended to treat such matters as confidential and did not unthinkingly or spitefully disclose to graduate students or journalists what had been discussed in confidence within the teaching staff of the department.

The chairman had great power. Sometimes he did harm to a department by his favoritism or even persecution. But aside from doing occasional ill, the department chairman usually kept the balance of his department, saw to it that legitimate points of view and modes of thought were represented in the teaching of the department, and that the traditions of his discipline were duly respected and departed from only with good reason. A good chairman knew on how long a leash some of his professors should be held and what justified the tolerance of departure from the canon.

Both of these things have changed. The chairman is no longer the ruler of his department; sometimes he does not even stand in a relationship of primus inter pares. He has become executive secretary with little or no discretionary power. The amount of administration has increased greatly, and there is little deference given to the chairman. One of his main tasks is to listen to the complaints of his colleagues—to their angry demands for higher salaries and promotion, to their efforts to persuade him privately of the desirability of appointing one of their protégés or political companions. The chairman can control very little; his former sovereignty has seeped away into all the ranks of the department. It is not always easy in some departments to find a senior person willing to become chairman. It threatens to be five years of absence from one's own research. It means the renunciation of nearly complete freedom and the assumption of a role in which one is both a

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powerless bystander and an errand boy between his departmental colleagues and the administration.

V

Universities are more competitive now than they used to be. The worry about "league tables" has become a sort of mania. The two surveys by Cartter and by Roose and Anderson are often mentioned; these surveys of the rankings of departments and universities have aggravated a state of mind that had already existed. It is not accidental that three such rankings were published within the dozen years between 1957 and 1969 and only one before that in the preceding half century. One of the ways of assuring that a university is in the "big leagues" is to see to it that it is "nationally visible."

The press paid little attention to universities fifty years ago, and this is one of the reasons why universities gave an impression of quiet and gravity. Accounts of accomplishments in games or occasional scientific achievements did appear in newspapers, but in general, universities were not news. University teachers were not pundits; they did not appear on the radio and were not interviewed by newspapers. University teachers did not become involved in litigations against their universities. The main concern of the public relations office of a university was to keep out of the newspapers, not to get into them. There was nothing like *The Chronicle of Higher Education* or *Change*.

The work of academic scientists in the production of the atomic bomb probably had a great deal to do with setting the stage for the expansion of publicity about universities. Academics were almost as prominent in the McCarthyite denunciation of Communist spies. Both the atomic bomb and McCarthyism persuaded journalists to begin looking upon universities as the objects of newspaper stories. The student disturbances of the 1960s and early 1970s also caused the volume of publicity about universities to leap upward. University teachers in the social sciences study current events now more than they did half a century ago; more of them are willing to express their opinions about these events; and there are several publications eager to print their opinions. Many teachers want publicity and vie for it; and some of those who receive little of it are jealous of those who receive more than their share.

Less dramatic but perhaps as important has been the fact that the federal government has become involved in university affairs by supplying most of the funds for academic scientific research. As government intrudes more into the affairs of universities, the more spectacular instances of this intrusion appear in the press. The universities rather

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like much of this publicity. It seems to be the normal thing, and even old-fashioned scholars who do not seek publicity are convinced that the universities must make themselves appreciated by the public, which supplies the funds for their continued existence. In the course of all this hullabaloo, the universities have lost much of their necessary self-enclosure.

VI

At the beginning of the century, the universities studied the past and the timeless. They studied history, classics, literature, oriental subjects, and the physical and biological sciences. When they studied the past, they stopped their studies well before the threshold of recent events. They did not study contemporary literature or contemporary history. Fifty years ago American universities were just beginning to move into the present. This was especially the case at Chicago where sociology and political science were concerned with the present. It was less so at more old-fashioned universities where the past still held its own, in uncongenial circumstances.

The social sciences were the first point of entry of the universities into the contemporary world. The reports and opinions of university social scientists are frequently reported in the press. They are "news" because they are concerned about the same things that concern newspapers and television. University social scientists are inextricably entangled with creating news for the press through their research and through their own opinions on current affairs.

The politicization of academics has contributed to the interpenetration of the inner world of the universities and the outer world of current contention. Academics have become more occupied with contemporary politics and have been taking partisan positions in political issues to the point of giving political ends precedence over intellectual ones—sometimes doing so under the cover of teaching and scholarly research. Politicization is not the study of contemporary politics, although it is encouraged by that; it is the infusion of contemporary political partisanship into universities.

Certainly the social scientists of the late 1920s often had political sympathies and affiliations. For the most part, however, they held these views in check, and the traditions of academic rhetoric required temperateness of expression. Where they were partisan, the arrangements they desired did not demand a far-reaching transformation of the fundamental constitution of society, nor did their political expression require melodramatic rhetoric. There was also a convention that teaching should be

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confined to facts. This made for fairly dull teaching, but it also contributed to the maintenance of the cool tone that prevailed in classrooms and in universities generally. Now, after a half century, it is widely believed among the younger generation of social scientists that "objectivity" and "evaluative neutrality" are mare's nests or deliberate deceptions, and impossible as well as undesirable. What the younger and middle generations vehemently deny, the older generation lacks the strength of conviction or strength of character to affirm. This is an invitation to partisan agitation in classrooms; although many teachers of the social sciences, especially those who are more mathematically able, do not avail themselves of the privileges afforded by this license, many in fact do. In any case, few are willing to speak out forthrightly on the possibility of separating statements of fact from evaluative statements.

Until the very beginning of our period, most academics were Republicans and Democrats; a very small number were socialists; and there were a few sympathizers with the Industrial Workers of the World (I do not know whether there was even one Wobbly in the academic world). In the 1920s there were a few (certainly not many more than would crowd a small broom cupboard) who were members of the Communist party. Of the vast majority who regarded themselves as Democrats or Republicans, very few took an active part in politics. The academic profession was, even in the robust hog-butchering Middle West, a genteel profession—perhaps a rather shabby genteel profession—and American politics in those days was not a place for the genteel. The national political arena could be entered mainly through service in the local and state political machines. The latter were filled with Bathhouse Johns and Hinky Dinks, lively and clever and not very scrupulous or refined.

This did not mean, however, that academics were indifferent to politics. Professors of economics tended toward the Republican party, although they disapproved wholeheartedly of protectionism. Sociologists and political scientists leaned to the reformers' movements.

In the 1930s the mass of American academics—especially in the humanities and social sciences, but elsewhere, too, outside the professional schools—embraced the New Deal with enthusiasm. From about 1932 onward, the long political silence began to give way to clamorous politics in American universities. The Communist party set about in right earnest to recruit students and teachers to the Party and to the flourishing crop of para-Party or fellow-traveling organizations. They made some progress at Harvard, City College of New York, the University of California at Berkeley, and perhaps at the University of Wisconsin.

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The fifty years through which we have passed have been fifty years of academic political zeal, enthusiasm, frenzy, alarm, excitement. At first this zeal was concentrated in a few universities; by the last decade and a half of our period it has spread through the entire system, although unevenly.

VII

The intensified political interest and activity of American academics over the past fifty years have taken place in a situation in which administrators and the lay governing bodies of universities have renounced much of the disciplinary authority that they once exercised over their teaching staffs. The half century preceding this last one saw sanctions not infrequently imposed against university teachers for exercising their civil freedoms.

Members of boards of trustees used to take affront very quickly when university and college teachers spoke in public from a standpoint that was called "socialistic" or "syndicalistic" or "communistic." This did not happen at Chicago or Harvard or Columbia, or if it did, the affronted ones were calmed or suppressed by their colleagues or by the president of the university. It did happen in lesser private colleges and universities as well as in state universities. Some state legislators were very excitable about such things in those days. They really had very little to be excited about: there were no revolutionaries of a dangerous kind in the country—certainly not in the universities—but it was only a little more than a decade after the Russian Revolution, and there had been Communist uprisings from Hamburg to Shanghai.

This was the time when the elites of small towns had been shaken by the cultural changes wrought by the First World War. Puritanical, pious, workaday, ambitious, patriotic America seemed to be under attack. The appearance of sympathy with bolshevism upset their inexperienced eyes. They were about the last generation of trustees who took their trusteeship in the narrowest and most literal sense of the word. The result was that provincial newspaper editors, dentists, merchants, and petty local politicians fanned each other's sparks of distrust of Europe and the eastern seaboard, of bohemianism and agnosticism.

In the late 1930s I read through all of the reports of infringements on academic freedom reported in the *Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors*. (I was refused access then to the archives and was refused again a few years ago.) I also read through the academic cases in the archives of the American Civil Liberties Union. Most of them had to do with sanctions exercised by presidents and boards of

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trustees against university teachers for political activities outside the university. The political activities were mostly of a rather mild socialistic tendency. There were practically no cases that had to do with political agitation in lectures or classes within the university. There were no cases of disrupting the college or university in its normal functioning. There were no cases of agitating students to go on strike, to boycott classes, or to hold sit-ins in university buildings. There were no charges that the teacher had neglected his classes; research was not an issue in most cases because the incidents occurred in institutions in which research was not expected of teachers. There was at least one case of a sociologist who, in his teaching about the family, had either spoken too plainly about sexual matters or expressed skepticism about the value of the monogamous family; there were very few such cases, and those that did occur were mainly at minor undergraduate colleges often under denominational sponsorship.

Most of the cases had to do with the civil freedom of academics, that is, their rights to express political views, within the framework of the law and outside the university, in the same way as any other citizen could. The issue at stake was the political freedom of the academic—not academic freedom, which is a different thing. The American Association of University Professors was certainly right to attempt to protect academics from the restriction of their rights as citizens. It called these rights "academic freedom" and left it at that; it practically never concerned itself with the obligation of academics to perform certain tasks and their freedom to carry them out. Not very long before he was murdered, Charles Frankel told me that he recalled having been told by John Dewey that when the American Association of University Professors was founded, it established two committees: one on academic freedom and tenure, the other on academic obligations. Dewey told him that the latter committee had not met for about three decades, while the former committee was almost continuously active.

VIII

The first decade of the half century of American academic life through which I have lived was a period of exceptional academic freedom in the sense of there being the freedom to do academic things. Research was not so expensive then; the departmental system gave opportunities to younger staff members to do research. Departments were beginning to be autonomous in the choice of colleagues. Administrators and heads of departments, especially in the more eminent universities, gave every faculty member the freedom to do what he

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thought he should be doing. Imagination and initiative in research were appreciated and rewarded to the extent that was possible with restricted resources. The federal government had not yet appeared on the scene to try to regulate the conduct of research or to police appointments.

Once the Second World War was out of the way, the universities resumed the course on which they had been moving with greater verve (as a result of the stimulating experience of war) and with the greater amplitude conferred by the affluence that increased the size of departments and permitted more and larger research projects. The McCarthyite harassment certainly alarmed and intimidated academics of leftist connections, and it seems to have curtailed their civil freedom; but I doubt whether it had much restrictive effect on academic freedom in teaching and research. The invocation of the Fifth Amendment did result in the dismissal of Moses Finley, who later became an eminent figure in Great Britain; but the activity about which he refused to testify was not his research and teaching. There were very few such cases in the American academic world. There might have been academics who were intimidated into refraining from deeper investigations or from teaching what they wanted to teach or who asserted beliefs that did not correspond with what they really thought. I myself never came across anyone who said that this had happened to him. Both academic freedom and the civil freedom of academics flourished in the United States in this past half century—the former without fluctuations and the latter once the McCarthyite intimidation ceased.

From the middle of the 1960s, however, infringements on academic freedom became at least as common—insofar as such things can be estimated when no statistics can be reliably assembled—as the infringements on the political freedom of academics had been in earlier periods, perhaps more so. The lead in public was taken by aggressive, not very brave students, encouraged by floods of favorable publicity in press and television and spurred by the knowledge that their elders were praising them for demonstrating moral elevation. The most impressive thing to me—having lived through the depression and the McCarthy period and having observed as closely as I could from a distance the behavior of German professors in the face of the Nazis—was the faint-heartedness of the American academic profession and how little it understood or cared for academic freedom.

IX

American students had almost always been pleasant and deferential young persons who had invariably accepted the universities as they

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were. It was therefore a shock that sent their teachers reeling when the students went against their institutions with criticisms that were, however outlandish, asserted with an unthinkingness called "sincerity." When the rebellious students demanded the reconstitution of the syllabus, the liberal academics found themselves speechless before the challenge. When it was demanded that students share in "hiring and firing decisions," this too seemed right. When it was demanded that "pluralism of standpoints" be admitted into teaching—meaning that radicals must be appointed to the teaching staff—that contention also appeared undeniable. Prudence and timidity supported the view that some of the new staff members should be appointed on grounds of their political convictions. When after a few years, the federal government entered the scene to insist on the suspension of intellectual criteria for academic appointment in the name of affirmative action, the position from which academic standards could be defended had already been evacuated. The federal government did not insist on the appointment of radicals; it required the appointment of blacks, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, American Indians, and women. Aside from equity and justice and amends for past injustice, the argument of "pluralism of standpoints" came in again; sociology contributed the idea of "role models." Blacks and others would introduce new standpoints; they would also be role models for their own kind.

Only a handful of academics rejected such preposterous statements. Most of them accepted the demands for the application of intellectually irrelevant criteria because they thought it would not affect their own work or because they were afraid not to do so because they had never really thought of the matter. Once state legislators and boards of trustees and imperious presidents gave up the field, McCarthy, student radicals, and the federal government all found it just as easy to intimidate the academics.

University administrators in most universities have gone along with the federal government's deforming demands, not wishing to have trouble and above all not wishing to endanger the large federal payments in grants and contracts for research. Most of them capitulated with little public complaint to the demand for a further renunciation of intellectual standards in academic appointments. Academic biomedical and physical scientists who had not yielded to the demands of radical students because they did not have so many were not worried that they would be forced to appoint unqualified members of ethnic groups or unqualified women. Their first interest was to get on with their research; they were confident of the importance of their research and they were confident, too, that the federal government would not compel them to

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adulterate their standards. They had no sympathy with administrators and members of those very few humanistic departments who, exceptionally, resisted the bullying of the federal government. The attitudes of the scientists, particularly those in the medical schools, gave evidence of their professional self-centeredness and of how lightly they had taken their responsibilities for the university as a whole.

X

How strange this all would seem to a professor who passed into the next world in 1930 and underwent a premature resurrection fifty years later. Mild and restrained in expression, moderate in his political interest and sympathy, and used to a *stilles, friedsames Gelehrtenleben,* he might well be alarmed by the noisiness and busyness of a contemporary university. The breezy bad manners of his colleagues might disturb him. He would be frightened, not reassured, by the large number of security officers, the university's own police force, patrolling the campus and the university's buildings. The consumption of food and drink in classes and seminars might startle him, and the state of the language spoken by his colleagues and pupils would confound him. The size of sums requested and granted for research would surprise him as would the number of administrators, high and low, and their secretaries. But what he would be least able to comprehend would be the presence of the federal government at every turn of the corner.

In the late 1930s the presidents of the leading American universities, then as ever in severe financial straits, agreed that they should not seek or accept financial support from the federal government—none was being offered—because they feared that such acceptance would be followed by the intrusion of the government into strictly academic matters. Brave words when there was neither temptation nor threat! After the Second World War, large sums of money were offered by the federal government, and the presidents of universities—probably not the same presidents who had so proudly and honorably turned their backs on money that was never offered—accepted with enthusiasm. The result has been as their impecunious predecessors predicted.

The acceptance of large sums for research has greatly changed the universities. The growth in the size of universities is partly a result of this; so is the relegation of undergraduate teaching to the status of something to be done by junior teachers, graduate students, and old fuddy-duddies who do no research. The activity of applying for grants has become a pervasive preoccupation. Even in the humanities, in which research can still be done with very little money, it has become

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common to apply for, and sometimes to obtain, a grant for research. Political science and sociology, having become ostensibly more scientific, need larger sums of money to conduct sample surveys and to deal with the larger quantities of data. The natural sciences where the wedge first entered, require, it goes without saying, more money to pay for more refined and more powerful instruments and more assistants and technicians to attend to their machines and to analyze the data that are generated through their use. All these activities and all this equipment depend on funds from the federal government. The number of students has also depended on the government's provision of grants and loans for the payment of tuition fees, cost of maintenance and other expenses, and the provision of funds to employ students as research assistants.

But this is not all. The federal government never developed a tradition of understanding what universities are, unlike the state legislatures and departments of education of the Middle West. It discovered their utility for military purposes during the Second World War, and since that time it has looked upon them as instruments and objects of policies concerned with ends other than the ends intended by universities. The federal government has put the universities in an extremely expensive iron maiden, through its demand for, and its surveillance of, the universities' conformity with "affirmative action," "rights of human and animal subjects," "access for the handicapped," "accountability," and other policies. These contracts and grants and the consequent surrender of the universities to the government's intrusive bureaucracy have compelled the universities to enlarge their own bureaucracies to meet all these demands for the keeping and submission of records, which the government requires to aid its surveillance of the universities' "compliance" and to enforce their "accountability." There are more administrators in universities than ever before, more paperwork, more reports, more committees, and more meetings to discuss business, more sensitivity to the government's policies.

XI

Wilhelm von Humboldt, whose memorandum of 1810 started universities on their modern course, said that universities need *Einsamkeit und Freiheit*. *Einsamkeit*—solitude, separateness, being alone in a small room—is one of the main absentees from the universities of the United States as THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR celebrates its fiftieth anniversary. It might have been a shy guest at the journal's christening fifty years ago, but now it is hardly to be found. The *Freiheit*, which was to enable the individual to benefit from his *Einsamkeit*, is also more hedged about

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now than it used to be, but it still exists and is in some respects greater than it used to be, both in ways that are in conformity with the best interests of intellectual life and in ways that are injurious to those interests.

In certain areas of academic life, scholars and scientists are very free, especially in the major universities. Presidents and boards of trustees are very much in awe of them. Some of them have used their freedom to great intellectual advantage, made great discoveries, and written works of great learning and insight. Many of them have misused their freedom by their deficient academic civility.

The misuse of academic freedom is a consequence of the belief that the universities are primarily instruments of ends other than intellectual ends. The utilitarian conception of the university about which Irving Babbitt and Abraham Flexner used to complain is still with us, but it has come to an accommodation with learning and is not all-pervasive. More noxious to universities is the political and emancipatory conception of the university that has become crystallized over the past fifteen years.

Until about a quarter of a century ago, it was thought that academic studies should be carried on without prejudice and with an appreciation of the intrinsic value and attainability of truth. Philosophers of science, theorists of historiography, and social scientists have now concluded that all intellectual activity is "ideological," and that objectivity is neither a worthy nor a feasible ideal. There is therefore no canon of major works in the humanities; there is no difference between political contention and social science. Some of these theorists also undertake to undermine the natural sciences with such methodological and sociological analyses, but they do not succeed in reaching the work going on in those fields. They do not succeed wholly in social sciences and the humanities either because many who assent to these anti-intellectual, anti-academic theories do not really assimilate them.

Nevertheless, the various forms of politicization of the universities, the intrusion of bohemianism into the universities, and the highbrow disparagement of objective knowledge form a tremendous pressure on the heart of the universities. The pressure emanates from the academic profession itself. The academic profession of fifty years ago was a relatively small corps of persons who regarded themselves as serving an intellectual tradition that was a postulate of their existence, however ineffectually they served it. The academic profession was a corps that accepted institutional and intellectual traditions perhaps too unreflectively, but also dutifully. The academic profession of fifty years ago was in many respects rather mousy; it did not seek confrontation. It had relatively few demands except to be left alone so that it could carry out

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its duties. Many of its members were intellectually mediocre and performed their tasks in a routine and unexacting way; they lived withdrawn lives and did not seek to dominate their society. Some of its members were great scholars and scientists; others were obstinate eccentrics, some of whom did excellent work, and some of whom did very little. Some of them soldiered on the job, but they did so quietly and did not try to justify their indolence and evasion of their tasks by large theories.

Today the academic profession is a very different entity. It is, for one thing, very much larger. It is more heterogeneous culturally and in its social origins. It is much more animated, more excitable, more voluble, more impolite, and much more political. The academic profession is much more demanding today. It wants more resources. Enough of its members to make a difference want more freedom to do whatever they want to do, even though what they want to do is not academic and not intellectual. The academic profession today wants more influence in society; it wants political influence and it wishes to exploit for its political purposes the academic positions to which it has been appointed—to teach and to do research and to contribute to keeping the university functioning effectively. There are, of course, many academics who do not share these unbridled aspirations and this passion for expressive and ideological politics.

The university of fifty years ago will never come back. It could not be brought back into existence, and even if it could, it would not be desirable that it should be brought back in the way in which I knew it as a youth. But it had a very sound core; it had the traditions of science and learning and of the academic ethos, together with much that was adventitious and unnecessary. Those traditions managed to withstand the force of the utilitarian outlook that was inimical to them.

There are many things occurring in universities nowadays that are inimical to these traditions, but traditions are tough plants. They have even insinuated themselves into the minds of those academics who have allowed themselves to be made into enemies of academic life. The emancipationist antinomianism and egalitarianism that continue in a different way the utilitarian outlook of an earlier period have had much influence on the contemporary American university—nearly all of it pernicious. Nevertheless, they are less deeply rooted than the traditions of science and scholarship and of the academic ethos which will, despite all, withstand them.

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Prayer for Prayer

ROBERT PACK

Darling, splitting the wood can wait until
the wind dies down. I want to try to say
what's troubling me, although we vowed before
we married that we'd keep our own beliefs
and let the children choose. They've left home now;
there's not much more that we can do for them;
it's you and me together, only us,
and I'm afraid you won't get into heaven,
not having turned to God. Without you, how
could I be happy there, unless God wills
that I forget this life? I don't want that!
The March sun hasn't thawed those icicles
gleaming along the edges of our roof;
perhaps this constant wind has numbed my faith.
I've never had to ask you this before,
but would you try to pray? Make up the words
if only for my sake; start thanking God
for daily things like breakfast oranges
heaped in the yellow bowl your mother painted—
a couple bathing in a waterfall—
our wedding gift of thirty years ago;
thank Him for your routine: feeding the birds
in winter, pruning apple trees in spring;
thank Him for splitting wood. You know I know
that even when you grumble, still it's work
you love. Nothing I do will feel complete
until I've given thanks for doing it,
so that I'm not alone: like thanking you
for thanking me when I prepare a meal

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adds grace to grace. That's not a phrase you'd use;
you would prefer to hold some meanings back:
"Grace is not fattening, how can it hurt?"
but what we feel is not so far apart,
though maybe it's the very space God wants
to test us with? My mother used to say:
"You cannot cling to what you love with all
your strength; God made some special part of us
for letting go." I understood her when
our children left, and I can almost hear
the spaces where they were. Maybe sorrow
is allowed in heaven, so God won't have to
cancel human love by making us forget?
I won't forget, not willingly; one day
in paradise, watching the clouds, I'd think
of you standing beside the frozen stream,
eyeing the wood still to be split and stacked,
and I'd be back on earth—at least at heart.
God means for marriages to end with death,
but after that the Bible isn't clear.
Perhaps God's love begins where human love
completes itself, and yet I'll never tire
of the past we've shared. I know you'll promise me
you'll try to pray, and then you'll ask the Lord
to help me find the strength to give up prayer—
as if God would enjoy your joke; you'll swear:
"By yonder icicle, I'll love the world until
it does me in!" Thinking is the problem;
we can't escape the sorrow of an end
without an end, death going on and on.
Although you never speak of it, I know
your father died while he was splitting wood;

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your mother's telling always starts the same:
"Some snow had fallen on his knitted hat . . ."
as if for her all time had stopped. Maybe
that is what heaven's like? She seems to smile,
but then the age lines darken in her face.
Darling, I know you know something in me
approves your laughing at my need to pray.
By yonder icicle, what human love
allows, we have! But don't stand grinning with
that orange in your mouth as if you were
some sacrificial pig! Go split more wood
while I put dinner on; listen for God's
silences even as the wind blows through
the icicles and piles snow by our shed;
we may be in for quite a night of it.

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"Prayer for Prayer" is the winner of the first Mary Elinore Smith Poetry Prize. The $200 prize is given in memory of Miss Smith by her family and friends. Mary Elinore Smith, who died in 1981, was an editor of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR.

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Philosophy in America Today

RICHARD RORTY

REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS within an intellectual discipline require a revisionist history of that discipline. Hans Reichenbach performed this service for analytic philosophy in his *Rise of Scientific Philosophy*. That book, published in 1951, presents the view of history that explains Quine's quip that people go into philosophy for one of two reasons: some are interested in the history of philosophy, and some in philosophy. Quine's wisecrack assumes, and Reichenbach's book argues, that the proper concern of philosophy is to solve a set of identifiable problems, problems arising out of the activity and results of the natural sciences. Reichenbach describes his book as follows:

> It maintains that philosophic speculation is a passing stage, occurring when philosophic problems are raised at a time which does not possess the logical means to solve them. It claims that there is, and always has been, a scientific approach to philosophy. And it wishes to show that from this ground has sprung a scientific philosophy which, in the science of our time, has found the tools to solve those problems that in earlier times have been the subject of guesswork only. To put it briefly: this book is written with the intention of showing that philosophy has proceeded from speculation to science.

Reichenbach's history could no longer be written in the terms in which he wrote it, since he took for granted all the positivist doctrines which, in the intervening thirty years, have been dismantled by Wittgenstein, Quine, Sellars, and Kuhn. But most postpositivistic analytic philosophers would still agree that philosophy has, in relatively recent times, "proceeded from speculation to science." They would accept the view that one can define philosophy in terms of a set of identifiable, enduring problems, which were dealt with in awkward and unsophisticated ways in earlier periods and are now being addressed with a precision and rigor hitherto unknown. There may be disagreement about which of these problems are to be solved and which dissolved or simply set aside. There may also be disagreement about whether, as Reichenbach thought, the tools are provided by science or whether, instead,

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they must be forged by the philosophers themselves. But these disagreements are minor compared to the broad agreement on the sort of historical story that is to be told.

Reichenbach's construction of a sweeping historical drama required him to be selective in his choice of incident. If one wants to interpret philosophy as an attempt to understand the nature of natural science, as flourishing when natural science has flourished, and as capable of being brought to a satisfactory conclusion now that the sciences have become "mature," one must take "the problems of philosophy" to be those that were formulated clearly, for the first time, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—the period in which the phenomenon of the New Science was the chief object of philosophers' attention. These were primarily problems about the nature and possibility of scientific knowledge, epistemological problems. Having identified philosophy with these problems, one can explain the Greek and medieval failure to formulate them clearly by reference to the primitive state of science before 1600, while brushing aside as unphilosophical and ideological the Greek concern with politics and poetry and the Christian concern with God. This will enable one to see Kant as, in Reichenbach's phrase, "the climax of speculative philosophy," and to skip lightly over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (a habit that still prevails among analytic philosophers—who see the interval between Kant and Frege as an unfortunate period of confusion).

Reichenbach thought it a serious misunderstanding of Kant to think of Hegel as his successor; rather, he said, "Hegel's system is the poor construction of a fanatic who has seen one empirical truth and attempts to make it a logical law within the most unscientific of all logics." In Reichenbach's view, Marx abandoned empiricism and embraced Hegelianism for unfortunate "psychological reasons." The nineteenth century is to be seen not as the beginning of a search for meaning in history but as the period in which natural scientists, rather than philosophy professors, proceeded to solve the questions that Descartes, Hume, and Kant had posed. Reichenbach condemns the sort of textbook that, in a chapter on the nineteenth century, mentions Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Spencer, and Bergson, and records their systems as though they were philosophical creations homogenous with the systems of earlier periods. Instead, Reichenbach says, we should see that

> the philosophy of the systems ends with Kant, and it is a misunderstanding of the history of philosophy to discuss the later systems on a level with those of Kant or Plato. Those older systems were expressive of the science of their time and gave pseudo-answers when no better answers were available. The philosophical systems of the nineteenth century were constructed at a time when a better philosophy was in the making; they are the work of men who did not see the

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philosophic discoveries immanent in the science of their time and who developed, under the name of philosophy, systems of naive generalizations and analogies. . . . Considered historically, these systems would be better compared to the dead end of a river that after flowing through fertile lands finally dries out in the desert.

This account of the history of philosophy makes a lot of sense even if one has been convinced by Kuhn that science is not as methodical as we once thought and by Quine that the "philosophic discoveries" Reichenbach admired were mostly dogmas. One can drop the dogmas and still preserve most of Reichenbach's history. One can still cleave to the view that philosophy began as natural science's account of itself, that attempts to claim knowledge outside of the natural sciences are to be measured against the procedures used within them, and that philosophy has recently become scientific and rigorous. I think that these views are held by the vast majority of analytic philosophers, and I do not wish to argue against a contextual definition of philosophy in these terms. It is as good a definition as we are likely to get *if* we want philosophy to be the name of a discipline, a set of research programs, an autonomous sector of culture. Reichenbach was right in saying that certain seventeenth- and eighteenth-century problems—Kant's problems, roughly speaking—which arose out of the attempt to give a scientific account of science itself, have often been thought of as *the* philosophical problems.

He was also right, I think, in dismissing lots of philosophical programs as attempts to claim the status of science without imitating its procedures or respecting its results. I myself would join Reichenbach in dismissing classical Husserlian phenomenology, Bergson, Whitehead, the Dewey of *Experience and Nature*, the James of *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, neo-Thomist epistemological realism, and a variety of other late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century systems. Bergson and Whitehead, and the bad ("metaphysical") parts of Dewey and James, seem to me merely weakened versions of idealism—attempts to answer "unscientifically" formulated epistemological questions about the "relation of subject and object" by "naive generalizations and analogies" that emphasize "feeling" rather than "cognition." Phenomenology and neo-Thomism also seem diagnosable and dismissible along Reichenbachian lines. Both movements tried in vain to isolate a *Fach* for themselves, distinct from science and its self-clarification, by giving sense to the notion of distinctively philosophical, super-scientific knowledge.

So I think that positivism in general, and Reichenbach in particular, served American philosophy well by making a clear distinction between philosophy as an explanation of, or an expansion of, scientific knowledge, and philosophy as something else. But I want to raise two

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questions about the relation between analytic philosophy and the tradition, and I shall try to answer both questions.

1. Can a Reichenbachian account of the past give us a story about the present and the future that describes a significant cultural function for philosophy to perform, a continuing task?
2. What about "philosophy as something else"—for example, the work of philosophers who do not claim to be giving anything like solutions to philosophic problems or super-scientific knowledge—the Continental competition, writers such as Heidegger, Foucault, and their nineteenth-century precursors? What do we lose by reading them out of philosophy?

About the time of Reichenbach's book, in the early 1950s, analytic philosophy began to take over American philosophy departments. The great émigrés—Carnap, Hempel, Feigl, Reichenbach, Bergmann, Tarski—began to be treated with the respect they deserved. Their disciples began to be appointed to, and to dominate, the most prestigious deparments. Departments that did not go along with this trend began to lose prestige. By 1960, a new set of philosophical paradigms was in place. A new sort of graduate education in philosophy was entrenched—one in which Dewey and Whitehead, heroes of the previous generation, were no longer read, in which the history of philosophy was decisively downgraded, and in which the study of logic assumed an importance previously given to the study of languages. Thanks to the postwar baby boom, the 1960s and early 1970s also happened to be the period in which the majority of living American Ph.D.'s in philosophy was educated. As a result, most of today's teachers of philosophy in American colleges and universities assimilated some version of Reichenbach's picture of the history of philosophy in graduate school. They were brought up to believe themselves the lucky participants in the beginnings of a new philosophical age—an Age of Analysis, in which things would finally be done properly. They were often led to despise the sort of person who was interested in the history of philosophy, or more generally in the history of thought, rather than in solving philosophical problems. With Reichenbach, they assumed that

> the philosopher of the old school is usually a man trained in literature and history, who has never learned the precision methods of the mathematical sciences or experienced the happiness of demonstrating a law of nature by a verification of all its consequences.

According to the hopes of the logical positivists, the advent of this new generation should have given rise to an unprecedented era of

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cooperation, teamwork, and agreement on results attained. Solid building blocks should have added to the edifice of knowledge. This did not happen. Indeed, now, in 1982, it seems far more improbable a forecast of the future of philosophy than it did in 1951, when Reichenbach wrote. In 1951 a graduate student, who (like myself) was in the process of learning about, or being converted to, analytic philosophy, could still believe that there was a finite number of distinct, specifiable, philosophical problems to be resolved—problems that any serious analytic philosopher would agree to be *the* outstanding problems. For example, there was the problem of the counterfactual conditional, the problem of whether an "emotive" analysis of ethical terms was satisfactory, Quine's problem about the nature of analyticity, and a few more. These were problems that fitted nicely into the vocabulary of the positivists. They could easily be seen as the final, proper formulation of problems that had been seen, as in a glass darkly, by Leibniz, Hume, and Kant. Further, there was agreement on what a solution to a philosophical problem looked like—for instance, Russell on definite descriptions, Frege on meaning and reference, Tarski on truth. In those days, when my generation was young, all the conditions for a Kuhnian normal, problem-solving discipline were fulfilled.

To recite this list of problems and paradigms is to evoke memories of a simpler, brighter, vanished world. In the interlocking central areas of analytic philosophy—epistemology, philosophy of language, and metaphysics—there are now as many paradigms as there are major philosophy departments. What counts as a serious problem for a UCLA Ph.D. need not count as one for a Chicago or a Cornell Ph.D., and conversely. Any problem that enjoys a simultaneous vogue in ten of the hundred or so analytic philosophy departments in America is doing exceptionally well. The field these days is a jungle of competing research programs, programs that seem to have a shorter and shorter half-life as the years go by. During the fifteen years after Reichenbach wrote, we witnessed the rise and fall of "Oxford philosophy." In the fifteen years since "West Coast Semantics" swept eastward and effected a *translatio imperii* from Oxford to the UCLA-Princeton-Harvard axis, we have had several brief shining moments in which the future of philosophy, or at least of philosophy of language, seemed clearly marked out. But each of these illuminations has suffered eclipse. There is no more consensus about the problems and methods of philosophy in America today than there was in Germany in 1920. At that time most philosophers were, perhaps, more or less neo-Kantian, but the dominant mode of academic life was that each *Ordinarius* had his system and produced students who thought of problems within that system as the leading problems of philosophy. That is pretty much the mode of life in American philosophy departments

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today. Most philosophers are more or less analytic, but there is no agreed upon interuniversity paradigm of philosophical work or any agreed upon list of central problems. The best hope for an American philosopher is Andy Warhol's promise that we shall all be superstars for approximately fifteen minutes apiece.

The situation in moral and social philosophy, admittedly, is not the same as in the so-called central areas of philosophy. Here we have Rawls's *Theory of Justice* as a genuine interuniversity paradigm, a book whose importance and permanence are deservedly recognized on all sides. But analytic philosophy cannot draw any comfort from this fact when it looks for a self-description that preserves and updates Reichenbach's. *A Theory of Justice* simply bypasses the meta-ethical issues that, in Reichenbach's eyes, were the sole connection between philosophy and normative judgments. It is a book that descends straight from Kant, Mill, and Sidgwick. The same book could have been written if logical positivism had never existed. It is not a triumph of analytic philosophizing. It is simply the best update of liberal social thought that we have. It happens to have been written by a professor of philosophy, but if Rawls had studied jurisprudence or political science rather than philosophy, it is not clear that he would have been led to write anything very different or even to argue in a different style.

Just as one would be hard put to say what the nature of philosophy is, such that Marx, Kierkegaard, and Frege are all great nineteenth-century philosophers, so it is hard to define philosophy so as to make clear why, for example, Kuhn, Kripke, and Rawls are three important contemporary philosophers (as opposed to some bland generic term such as "thinker" or "intellectual"), not to speak of why they are all *analytic* philosophers. This is not, to be sure, a serious problem. One should not, I think, try to construct definitions of philosophy that will mark it off, ahistorically, from other academic disciplines. But it is important to see that Reichenbach thought we should, and that analytic philosophy grew up with a self-image that depended upon it being possible to do so. Reichenbach told us that what made philosophy philosophy was a list of problems that could now be clearly seen—problems about the nature and possibility of scientific knowledge and its relations to the rest of culture. Analytic philosophers have continued to believe that some problems are distinctly "philosophical" problems. But they are no longer able either to accept Reichenbach's list or to construct principles for drawing up a new list. Instead, they have simply let the list be constructed anew every few years. One of the reasons people come to the divisional meetings of the American Philosophical Association is to find out what the fashionable new problems are—what the "good people in the field" are talking about nowadays. To constitute a problem as

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philosophical it has now become enough that a well-known professor of philosophy has written an interesting paper posing it. The institutional tail is wagging the scientific dog. We no longer have a story to tell about the relation between our problems and those of the past, one which shows how much more clearly we understand them than, say, Leibniz or Hume did. Instead, we have a thriving enterprise that looks back only a few decades, and finds its principal justification in the sheer intelligence of the people who are part of it.

In saying that analytic philosophy now has only a stylistic and sociological unity, I am not suggesting that analytic philosophy is a bad thing, or that it is in bad shape. The analytic style is, I think, a good style, and the esprit de corps among analytic philosophers is healthy and useful. All I am saying is that analytic philosophy has become, whether it likes it or not, the same sort of discipline that we find in the other humanities departments—departments where pretensions to rigor and to scientific status are less evident. The normal form of life in the humanities is the same as that in the arts and in belles lettres: a genius does something new and interesting and persuasive, and his or her admirers begin to form a school or movement. Thus, for example, the *Annales* sort of historiography is currently fashionable in many American history departments; deconstructive criticism in many departments of comparative literature; and "possible world semantics" in many philosophy departments. To say that these movements are fashionable is to say that Fernand Braudel, or Jacques Derrida, or Richard Montague, has done some remarkable work and has many readers and imitators. It would be a mistake to try to do more than this—to try to explain, in the manner of Reichenbach, that Montague has at last succeeded in clearly stating, or in solving, some long-standing problem of scientific philosophy or some of the outstanding problems of analytic philosophy. Any genealogy we construct to back up such a claim is going to be wildly implausible and gerrymandered, as would one that tried to show that Derrida is the true heir of Dr. Johnson, or Braudel of Ranke.

Rather, we should relax and say, with our colleagues in history and literature, that we in the humanities differ from scientists precisely in *not* knowing in advance what our problems are, and in not *needing* to provide criteria of identity that will tell us whether our problems are the same as those of our predecessors. To adopt this relaxed attitude is to *let* the institutional tail wag the pseudoscientific dog. It is to admit that our geniuses invent problems and programs de novo, rather than being presented with them by the subject matter itself or by the current state of research. The same point can be made by saying that it is a mark of humanistic culture *not* to try to reduce the new to the old, or to insist upon a canonical list of problems or methods or a canonical vocabulary

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in which problems are to be stated. This Gadamerian point can be put in Kuhnian terms by saying that the essential thing is not to be scientific but to have a disciplinary matrix for ongoing work that maintains a reasonable balance between standards and openness—or in Habermasian terms, by saying that what matters is that conversation be continuous and undistorted.

The relaxed attitude I am recommending suggests that we should not worry about whether analytic philosophy has retained the scientific status that Reichenbach claimed for logical positivism; nor should we worry about whether what we are doing is really philosophy. We should let a hundred flowers bloom, admire them while they last, and leave botanizing to the intellectual historians of the next century. But this attitude does not chime with that of most analytic philosophers. They are not willing to give up the Reichenbachian attempt to get philosophy out of the humanities and into the sciences. They would insist that we analytic philosophers have a certain special distinction that marks us off from the humanists. This distinction is, not our concern with an enumerable list of problems, as Reichenbach thought it was, but rather our possession of a special intellectual virtue, a virtue shared with mathematicians and physicists but not with the average professor of literature or history. In this view, merit in philosophy is not so much a matter of having actually solved some of the problems of philosophy (since it is tacitly admitted that what counts as a problem is pretty much up for grabs), but rather a matter of sheer intelligence, sheer problem-solving ability. The suggestion is that there is a certain range of talent, or cast of mind, or something of the sort, of which philosophers typically have an abundance.

If one asks for more detail about what this intellectual virtue called philosophical ability consists of, the answer would presumably go something like this: the good philosopher should be able to spot flaws in any argument he hears. Further, he should be able to do this on topics outside of those usually discussed in philosophy courses as well as on specifically philosophical issues. As a corollary, he should be able to construct as good an argument as can be constructed for any view, no matter how wrongheaded. The philosophical ideal is the ability to see the entire universe of possible assertions in all their inferential relationships to one another, and thus to be able to construct, or criticize, any argument.

I think it is true that analytic philosophers typically do have a lot of this sort of ability. But, in any case, it is a gradually self-validating self-description. One will not be encouraged to go to a prestigious American graduate philosophy department if one does not have this particular

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intellectual virtue. Even if one loves to study Plato, Augustine, Spinoza, Kant, Hegel, et cetera, but lacks this skill at argumentation, one will not be encouraged to pursue a career in philosophy. One will wind up studying, instead, in a comparative literature department, a politics department, or a history department. The result is a gradual strengthening of the analytic philosophers' image of themselves, not as specialists in a certain area of scientific inquiry, but rather as a corps d'elite united by talent rather than a list of shared problems and prior results—the *Inspecteurs des Finances* of the academy, so to speak. It thus becomes less and less important for analytic philosophy to have a coherent metaphilosophical account of itself, or to have answers to the question "What counts as a specifically philosophical problem?" It becomes less important to find links between the issues discussed by Kuhn, Kripke, and Rawls. It also becomes less important for analytic philosophy to have what Reichenbach gave positivism—an account of its relation to the past. For it is common skills rather than common problems or a common genealogy that matters.

This means that the claim "philosophy has now become scientific rather than speculative" has come to mean something very different for contemporary analytic philosophy than it meant for Reichenbach. "Scientific" now means something like "argumentative." The contrast between the old and the new is no longer a contrast between an immature prescientific and a mature scientific stage of discussion of a common set of problems, but a contrast between styles—the scientific style and the literary style. The former style asks that premises be explicitly spelled out rather than guessed at, that terms be introduced by definitions rather than by allusion. The latter style may involve argumentation, but that is not essential; what is essential is telling a new story, suggesting a new language game, in the hope of a new form of intellectual life.

If what I have said in the previous section is right, then this shift in identifying criterion from subject to style is natural and predictable. If a discipline has no well-defined subject matter, and no interuniversity paradigms of achievement, then it will have to have stylistic paradigms. This, I think, is what has happened to analytic philosophy as it moved from its positivistic to its postpositivistic stage, in the course of the last thirty years. But, once again, I do not take this to be a denigrating remark. It is not a suggestion that philosophers are doing something they shouldn't be doing. Believing, as I do, that philosophy is not the sort of thing that has a historical essence or mission, I am not saying that the analytic movement has somehow wandered off the true path. Philosophy, in the narrow and professional sense, is just whatever we philosophy professors do. Having a common style and a niche in the normal table of organization of academic departments is quite enough to make

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our discipline as identifiable and respectable as any other. Indeed, where the style is the kind of argumentative skill I have described, it is enough to make it socially valuable. A nation can count itself lucky to have several thousand relatively leisured and relatively unspecialized intellectuals who are exceptionally good at putting together arguments and pulling them apart. Such a group is a precious cultural resource. As we keep saying in our grant applications, the nation would do well to have analytic philosophers advise on public projects. We shall kibitz at least as well as any other professional group—and perhaps rather better than most.

However, there is something dubious about the current self-image of analytic philosophy. I can perhaps bring it out by saying that we are in bad faith insofar as we tend to take credit for being wise as well as clever. We are not entitled to this double dollop of self-esteem. Philosophy professors were traditionally thought of as wise because they were believed to have read and experienced much, traveled far in the realms of thought, pondered the great problems that have always troubled the human spirit. This image was more or less plausible as long as the study of philosophy centered around the study of the history of philosophy (as it did before 1950 in American philosophy departments, and still does in France, Germany, and some other countries). The positivist revolution, however, changed the image of the philosopher from scholar to scientist. It suggested that the best philosophy student would not be the sort who might have gone into intellectual history, but rather into mathematics or physics. In the course of the transition to postpositivistic analytic philosophy, the image of the scientist has been replaced, though it is not quite clear by what. Perhaps the most appropriate model for the analytic philosopher is now the lawyer, rather than either the scholar or the scientist. The ability to construct a good brief, or conduct a devastating cross-examination, or find relevant precedents is similar to the ability that analytic philosophers think of as distinctively philosophical. A good lawyer or a good analytic philosopher must be able to see at a glance the inferential relationships between all the members of a bewilderingly large set of propositions.

The reason why philosophers still are inclined to credit themselves with wisdom is that contemporary analytic philosophy inherits from the logical positivism of thirty years ago the pretension to possess a secure matrix of heuristic concepts—categories that permit it to classify, comprehend, and criticize the rest of culture. But it does not. There has been no successor to the positivist scheme that even attempts a similar comprehensiveness, much less a consensus on such a scheme among postpositivistic analytic philosophers. But the rhetoric we often use in grant-getting—and the condescension we often exhibit to professors of

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other subjects—still takes for granted that we have a mastery of conceptual questions. This attitude suggests that in addition to our well-known argumentative ability we have some special inside knowledge about concepts that gives us a privileged position. But we have no such knowledge, no such higher standpoint. We have dismantled Reichenbach's heuristic scaffolding—and his list of the problems of scientific philosophy along with it. We have not substituted anything for it, and we should not try to do so. If there is one thing we have learned about concepts in recent decades it is that to have a concept is to be able to use a word, that to have a mastery of concepts is to be able to use a language, and that languages are created rather than discovered. We should renounce the idea that we have access to some superconcepts, which are the concepts of no particular historical epoch, no particular profession, no particular portion of culture, but which somehow necessarily inhere in all subordinate concepts and can be used to analyze the latter. We would thus give up the old dream, shared by Plato and by Reichenbach, from which Wittgenstein woke us—the dream of philosophy as *scientia scientiarum*, as knowledge about the nature of scientific knowledge, as the result of successful inquiry into the nature of all possible inquiry.

Let me try to make this last point more concrete in a brief excursus on applied philosophy, an area in which talk of conceptual issues is unhappily common. If we give up the rhetoric of the sage, we shall no longer say that whereas a physician faced with a medicomoral dilemma may *use* the words "person" or "best interest," we, the philosophers, can *analyze* these terms for her. The most we can do is explain the way in which various people we have read (Mill, Hume, Spinoza, Kant, Hegel) used the terms, and the kinds of things they said employing them. This may add something, perhaps even something useful, to the way in which the doctor uses the terms henceforth, and so to the decision she will make. But it does not tell her what she really meant, what presuppositions she made, what was really in question. It just does what any other increase in humanistic culture does—it gives a sense of some new alternatives, new contexts, new languages. We are not doing something different in kind from what the professor of literature or history would or could do in the same situation. We are just enlarging a linguistic and argumentative repertoire, and thus an imagination. Beyond this traditional humanist task, we can do only what lawyers do—provide an argument for whatever our client has decided to do, make the chosen cause appear the better.

We adopt a superior attitude, I think, because we frequently encounter physicians or psychologists or historians or literary critics or simply ordinary citizens parroting words or slogans that originated with, or were analyzed by, one or another of the great dead philosophers. So we

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tend to assume that we philosophers know what is going on, in a way in which these people who do not know the genealogy of the terms or phrases cannot. This is a non sequitur. If a physician is torn between respect for the dignity of her patient and the need to minimize his pain, she is not confused on matters that the philosopher, able to discourse on the advantages and disadvantages of teleological and utilitarian ethics, is clear about. Articulateness is a virtue, but it is not the same as eliminating confusion, the attainment of clarity. One can become more articulate about one's alternatives by employing a web of words that are woven by a novelist, a literary historian, a social historian, or a theologian as well. But in none of these cases, any more than in the case of a moral philosopher's web, will a new articulateness reveal what one really meant all along, really presupposed all the time. One of the things Wittgenstein taught us, a lesson that helps us distance ourselves from Reichenbach, is that finding plausible premises from which an assertion can be inferred is not finding what the assertor really had in mind. Another of the things he taught us was that learning to tell a story about what someone is doing is not necessarily, or even usually, a discovery of that person's original problem or motive or intention. Constructing an argument, in the scientific style, or a story, in the literary style, are both good things to do. But they are not discoveries of an antecedent reality that has been waiting to be unearthed by analysis or reflection. Everything that has happened within analytic philosophy in the last thirty years has helped us see the differences between such constructions and the sort of scientific discovery into which Reichenbach wished to assimilate philosophical inquiry.

So far I have said that analytic philosophy has been forced, by its own internal antipositivist dialectic, to move away from an image of itself as a science that achieves results and toward an image in which it is simply the free—and, one might almost say, "speculative"—exercise of argumentative skill. "Speculative" here means "unconstrained by any prior set of distinctions or lists of problems." Reichenbach *redivivus* would presumably be appalled by this lack of constraint—by the confusion of tongues, the proliferation of problems and programs, in contemporary American philosophy. But he would admire the style, the insistence on argument, the dialectical acuity. He would approve of the widespread distrust among philosophers of those who, as he put it, were "trained in literature and history, who have never learned the precision methods of the mathematical sciences." He would agree with a distinguished analytic philosopher who urged that "intellectual hygiene" requires one not to read the books of Derrida and Foucault. This attitude, however, has created practical problems in American academic life, problems

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epitomized in the question: Who is going to teach Hegel? I now want to turn to these problems.

Reichenbach's answer to this question was, "If possible, nobody." This answer makes perfectly good sense if one takes Hegel to be trying and failing to do the sort of thing that Locke, Leibniz, Hume, and Kant wanted to do—namely, understand the nature, possibility, and extent of the achievements of the natural sciences. Hegel certainly did not do that very well. It also makes sense if one emphasizes the *Logic* and Hegel's rhetoric about "system" and *Wissenschaft*. But these are not the parts of Hegel's work that mattered to Marx or, more generally, to the historical and political thought of the nineteenth century. What mattered were precisely those parts that turned away from the knowledge of nature, from the phenomenon of the New Science, to the historicist self-understanding and self-determination of human beings: the *Phenomenology*, the *Philosophy of Right*, and the *Philosophy of History*. With these works Hegel began a sequence of overlapping stories about the course of human history, a sequence that includes Marx, Nietzsche, late Heidegger, and Foucault. These stories are not "philosophical systems." They do not attempt to provide solutions to problems about subject and object, or to any of the problems that Reichenbach believed nineteenth-century natural science had settled. But this genre of writing embodies, I think, the chief alternative to Reichenbach's answer to the question of what philosophy can be in the age of modern science.

The question, "Who shall now teach Hegel?" is shorthand for the question, "Who is going to teach this genre—all the so-called Continental philosophers?" The obvious answer to this question is, "Whoever cares to study them." This is also the right answer, but we can only accept it wholeheartedly if we clear away a set of factitious questions. One such question is, "Are these Continental philosophers really philosophers?" Analytic philosophers, because they identify philosophical ability with argumentative skill and notice that there is nothing they would consider an argument in the bulk of Heidegger or Foucault, suggest that these must be people who tried to be philosophers and failed—incompetent philosophers. This is as silly as saying that Plato was an incompetent sophist, or that a hedgehog is an incompetent fox. Hegel knew what he thought about philosophers who imitated the method and style of mathematics. He thought they were incompetent. These reciprocal charges of incompetence do nobody any good. We should just drop the questions of what philosophy really is or who really counts as a philosopher.

Ours is neither the first, nor will it be the last, period in which the intellectuals whose self-descriptions included the word *philosophy* divided into separate swarms and battled over territory. In late nine-

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teenth-century America what we now call philosophy hived off from what we now call Christian apologetics, to the accompaniment of reciprocal charges of "not being really a philosopher at all." Similar sorts of things happened when what we now call "empirical psychology" was beginning to set up in business on its own. Nowadays we see struggles between philosophy and mathematics departments to decide whose budget will bear the expense of the one mathematical logician the university can afford. Such disputes over money and power produce a lot of ad hoc rhetoric about the nature of the discipline, rhetoric that an experienced dean will automatically tune out. Such disputes only become dangerous when one side wants to say that the material taught by the other side should not be taught at all.

Sadly enough, this sort of thing does get said. I have heard analytic philosophers get furious at comparative literature departments for trespassing on philosophical turf by teaching Nietzsche and Derrida, and doubly furious at the suggestion that they might teach it themselves. Conversely, I have heard fans of Continental philosophy be obnoxious about the "mere logic-chopping" with which their analytic colleagues waste students' time and dehydrate their minds. Like reciprocal charges of incompetence, this sort of rhetoric is pointless. It is also dangerous, for it can actually result in colleges and universities not having people on the faculty who can explain certain books to interested students. Yet the only way in which institutions of liberal learning can justify their existence is by being places where students can find in the library practically any book—Gadamer or Kripke, Searle or Derrida—and then find somebody to talk with about it. When all the jockeying to decide which department's budget will bear the freight is over, we have to make sure that the result has not been to limit the possibilities open to the students.

It follows from what I have been saying that we should not fuss about building bridges between analytic and Continental philosophy. Such a project would make sense if, as is sometimes said, the two sides were attacking common problems with different methods. But, in the first place, there are no such common problems: looking for a historical story to tell does not encounter the same sort of problems as are discussed in the analytic philosophical journals. In the second place, the notion of method finds no clear application on either side. The notion of powerful analytic tools that Reichenbach invoked no longer has any relevance to what analytic philosophers actually do. The tools in question were merely the positivist distinctions of Reichenbach's day. Such new tools as we have acquired are merely the more or less transitory distinctions of later days. The thrust of post-Husserlian Continental philosophy has also been against method. Husserl's quest for a phenomenological method

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was, like Reichenbach's logical positivism, an expression of the urge for "the secure path of a science." But Husserl was a brief and futile interruption of the Hegel-Marx-Nietzsche-Heidegger-Foucault sequence, which I am taking as paradigmatically Continental, and which Husserl condemned as historicist. What distinguish Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Foucault from Hegel and Marx are precisely the increasing wholeheartedness with which they give up the notions of system, method, and science, their increasing willingness to blur the lines between disciplines, and their refusal to insist that philosophy be an autonomous *Fach*.

If we put aside wistful talk of bridge-building and joining forces, we can see the analytic-Continental split as both permanent and harmless. We should not see it as tearing philosophy apart. There is no single entity called *philosophy* that once was whole and now is sundered. Philosophy is not the name of a natural kind, but just the name of one of the pigeonholes into which humanistic culture is divided for administrative and bibliographical purposes. A Reichenbachian account of what counts as scientific philosophy, like a Heideggerian account of what counts as "ontological" rather than "ontic," is merely a device for directing attention to the range of topics one wants to discuss. If we get away from such gerrymandering, to a neutral sense of the term philosophy rather than a particular research program or style, then we shall have something as bland as Sellars's definition: "seeing how things, in the largest sense of the term, hang together, in the largest sense of the term." But this neutral sense has little to do with philosophy in any professional sense. Since both postpositivistic analytic philosophy and postphenomenological Continental philosophy abjure the Reichenbachian notion of a permanent neutral conceptual matrix within which all thought and language must fit, they should join in abdicating the role of sage, of final authority on the meaningfulness or the rationality of assertions or actions. Having joined in this renunciation, they can agree to differ on whether finding interesting new problems about which to argue or telling sweeping historical stories is the more profitable residual enterprise.

I can summarize the story I have been telling in this essay as follows:

1. Analytic philosophy started off as a way of moving from speculation to science—from philosophy as a historically-based discipline to philosophy as a discipline centering around logical analysis.

2. The notion of "logical analysis" turned upon itself and committed slow suicide in Wittgensteinian, "ordinary language," Quinean, Kuhnian, and Sellarsian criticisms of the purportedly scientific vocabu-

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lary that Reichenbach, for example, had taken for granted.

3. Analytic philosophy was thus left without a genealogy, a sense of mission, or a metaphilosophy. Training in philosophy turned into a sort of "casebook" procedure, of the sort found in law schools. Students' wits were sharpened by reading preprints of articles by currently fashionable figures and finding objections to them. The students so trained ceased thinking of themselves as either continuing a tradition or as participating in the solution of the outstanding problems at the frontiers of a science. Rather, they took their self-image from a style and quality of argumentation. They became quasi-lawyers rather than quasi-scientists—hoping an interesting new case would turn up.

4. This development hardened the split between analytic and Continental philosophy by moving the study of Hegel, Neitzsche, Heidegger, et cetera, out of philosophy departments. In American universities this tradition is now discussed in various other departments—for example, history, politics, and comparative literature.

5. The result is to leave American philosophy departments stranded somewhere between the humanities (their ancestral home), the natural sciences (the territory into which they once hoped to move, but were never fully accepted), and the social sciences (toward which they are now putting out feelers). The older sort of philosophy professor—who might have been a historian or literary critic almost as well—is dying out. The newer sort would like to think of himself as a sort of free-ranging analytic intellect, able to bring philosophical expertise to bear on anything that comes up, while also having a home territory about which he commands special knowledge. This is, however, a difficult image to sustain. The increasingly short half-lives of philosophical problems and programs make the home territory shifting ground. The rest of the academy has (reasonably enough) become puzzled about what philosophical expertise might be.

My story has been one of struggles between kinds of professors, professors with different aptitudes and consequently with different paradigms and interests. It is a story of academic politics—not much more, in the long run, than a matter of what sorts of professors come under which departmental budgets. Problems created by academic politics can be solved by more academic politics. One may expect, by the end of the century, that philosophy in America will have gotten over the ambiguities that have marked the last thirty years and will, once again, begin to develop a clear self-image. One possibility is that this image will be of a new discipline, one not much more than fifty years old, which (unless analytic philosophy has, in the meantime, triumphed in the Continental universities) does not try to link up with, or even to

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argue with, what is practiced under the heading of philosophy in other parts of the world.

However, my treatment of the topic has left something out. Quarrels between professors are never entirely disconnected from larger quarrels. There was a hidden agenda behind the split between old-fashioned humanistic philosophy (of the Dewey-Whitehead sort) and the positivists; a similar agenda lies behind the current split between devotees of analytic and of Continental philosophy. The heavy breathing on both sides about the immorality or stupidity of the opposition signals passions that academic power struggles cannot fully explain.

Although philosophy is not something that once was whole and now is sundered, something else is—namely, the secular intellectual's conception of himself. Up until Kant, the secular intellectual saw the knowledge gained by the advancing natural sciences as the point of his life. Throughout the nineteenth century, men such as Huxley and Clifford and Peirce still saw respect for scientific truth as the highest human virtue, the moral equivalent of the Christian's love and fear of God. These nineteenth-century figures were Reichenbach's heroes. But the nineteenth century also saw the rise of a new sort of secular intellectual, one who had lost faith in science with the same thoroughness as men in the Enlightenment had lost faith in God. Carlyle and Henry Adams are examples of this new kind of intellectual, the kind whose consciousness is dominated by a sense of the contingency of history, the contingency of the vocabulary that he himself is using, the sense that nature and scientific truth are largely beside the point and that history is up for grabs. This sort of intellectual is secular with a vengeance, for he sees the religion of science or of humanity as being just as self-deceptive as the old-time religion. His thought tends toward Nietzsche's view of science as merely a prolongation of theology—of both as forms of "the longest lie." The attitude of such intellectuals toward scientific or linguistic philosophy is summed up in Nietzsche's wisecrack: "I fear that we shall be unable to get rid of God, since we still believe in grammar."

This split between two sorts of intellectuals has become deeper in our own century. It is, indeed, no mere matter of academic politics. It is the split imprecisely sketched by Snow's contrast between the scientific culture and the literary culture. It is the antagonism that begins to become explicit when analytic philosophers mutter about the irrationalism that rages in literature departments and when Continental philosophers become shrill about the lack of human significance in the works of the analysts. It is the difference between the intellectual who believes that something like the application of scientific method is the best hope of human freedom and the intellectual who, with Foucault and Heideg-

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ger, sees this notion of scientific method as the mask behind which lurks the cruelty and despair of a nihilistic age. It comes out when analytic philosophers remark that Carnap emigrated while Heidegger joined the Nazi party, or that Russell saw through Stalinism and Sartre did not, or that Rawls shares the ordinary civilized hope for the rule of law and Foucault does not. It helps explain why Kripke and Kuhn and Rawls are all somehow working the same side of the street, even though their interests hardly overlap, while Heidegger and Foucault and Derrida are working the other, even though they discuss widely different topics.

One can call this a political split because both sides think of themselves as looking out for the interests of the global polis, as the leaders who must make articulate to their fellow citizens the dangers of the time. Further, this division into the scientific and the unscientific intellectuals is related in all sorts of ways to all sorts of issues that are political in narrower and more familiar senses. Rather than pursue these issues, however, I simply want to suggest that we keep pragmatic tolerance going as long as we can—that both sides see the other as honest, if misguided, colleagues doing their best to bring light to a dark time. In particular, we should remind ourselves that although there are relations between academic politics and real politics, they are not tight enough to justify carrying the passions of the latter over into the former.

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The Gift

FREDERICK MORGAN

By day she sat at the top of the house
where opposites of space and time
kept her forever out of his reach.

How to remain what he was at that moment,
a stream flowing forward into the future?
Longing to worship some goddess of the dawn
he nonetheless knew what went on behind his back.

Reluctant movements behind the bleached curtains:
"I would kill you rather than let you touch me!"
Though the shadow realm lay open, he knew
(offering at the threshold his keepsake of wine)
he'd get but a portion, not the treasure.

And yet, her hand had once rested on his
in joyous neglect of clothing their dead!
Now, bare-breasted, she nursed a male child
as the dark tertium quid stood by like a shadow

muttering his toll of illusions . . . No help—
no help for the cindery man of reasons
who, lucky but once, had received her as gift.

✪ FREDERICK MORGAN is co-editor of the *Hudson Review*. His most recent books are *Death Mother and Other Poems* and *Poems of the Two Worlds*.

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Miami

Daniel Mark Epstein

After years of stock-car racing, running
rifles to Cuba, money from Rio, high
diving from helicopters into the Gulf;
after a life at gunpoint, on a dare,
my father can't make the flight out of Miami.

Turbojets roar and sing, the ground crew
scatters out of the shadow of the plane.
My father undoes his seatbelt, makes his way
up the aisle, dead white and sweating,
ducks out the hatchway, mumbling
luggage was left at the dock, his watch
in the diner. Head down
he lurches through the accordion boarding tube,
walks the shining wing of the airport, past
windows full of planes and sky, past bars,
candy machines and posters for Broadway shows.
Gasping in the stratosphere of terror, he
bursts through the glass doors and runs
to a little garden near the rental cars.
He sits among the oleanders and palms.

It started with the Bay Bridge.
He couldn't take that steel vault into the blue

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above the blue, so much horizon!
Then it was the road itself, the rise and fall
the continual blind curve.
He hired a chauffeur, he took the train.
Then it was hotels, so many rooms
the same, he had to sleep with the light on.
His courage has shrunk to the size of a windowbox.

Father who scared the witches and vampires
from my childhood closets, father
who walked before me like a hero's shield
through neighborhoods where hoodlums honed their knives
on concrete, where nerve was law,
who will drive you home from Miami?
You're broke and I'm a thousand miles away
with frightened children of my own.
Who will rescue you from the garden
where jets flash like swords above your head?

✪ DANIEL MARK EPSTEIN's play *The Midnight Visitor* opened off Broadway in the autumn of 1981. "Miami" is from his forthcoming book, *The Book of Fortune*, to be published by Overlook/Viking Press.

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Upstate Lilacs

DONALD PETERSEN

Up the spring hillside where the dug road went
Before the county realigned it, past
Broken stone walls and grown-up fields, we find
The old foundations folding. Round about them
The lilacs stand, stiffly, with none to please
Or take account of. By the ruined sills
They wave their heart-shaped leaves and shake their blooms,
Flouting the fact that those who planted them
Gave up the homestead. If the shallow wells
Went foul, if rains and snows of yesteryear
Escaped the catchments, if the summer sun
Turned on the crops, leaving the fields burnt straw,
If three hard winters cracked the will to plough,
Or if, simply, there was no special reason
To stay on high ground when the Indians
That held the river valley had moved on,
We cannot know, although these old maids might,
These gnarled old maids, the hardiest of whom
Stand round about in green and lavender,
Heedless of man, preferring their perfume.

✪ DONALD PETERSEN, professor of English at the State University of New York at Oneonta, is the author of *The Spectral Boy*, a collection of poems. His work has appeared in *Poetry*, *Furioso*, and the *Paris Review*.

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Literary Studies: The Last Fifty Years

ROBERT M. ADAMS

By way of teasing the ancientry, my children sometimes ask me to tell them about my adventures in the Spanish-American War. I am not *that* old, not 'arf of it, and my first disclaimer in writing about the university teaching of English fifty years ago and today is that I cannot quite stretch to cover the two ends of the period. I entered Columbia College in 1932, but did not (as teachers like to say) face my first class till 1938; though I still have peripheral dealings with colleges, my last regular teaching assignment, at UCLA, terminated in 1978. So there is no Golden Jubilee for me, not yet, thank you. As an active teacher I cover only forty of the assigned fifty years, though at both ends I have been an interested and concerned observer. As for the middle period, it offers such a rich and various body of material that I will have no choice but to be perfunctory and scattered in handling a subject for which a full volume would be inadequate.

Let me begin by noting that in 1932 there was a very perceptible limitation of methodology in the study and teaching of English literature: history ruled the roost. At Columbia, though by no means everywhere in the profession, certain premonitions and anticipations of the New Criticism had been felt, mostly in the writings of I. A. Richards (*The Principles of Literary Criticism*, 1924; *Practical Criticism*, 1929). Notwithstanding, most literary study was understood to be a variety of history. One might investigate the milieu of a writer to understand what influences had shaped if not produced him; or delve into his life to understand the personal experiences entering into his work; or study the history of the language to learn what his words meant when he wrote them; or investigate his audience to find out what chords in it he had successfully touched. Professor John Livingston Lowes's *Road to Xanadu* (1927) was a triumph of the biographical-psychological approach. The masterpiece of the history-of-ideas school, Professor A. O. Lovejoy's *Great Chain of Being*, lay ten years in the future, but 1933 saw the birth of a magazine largely devoted to his method, *English Literary History*.

✪ ROBERT M. ADAMS is the author of *Bad Mouth: Fugitive Papers on the Dark Side* and *The Lost Museum: Glimpses of Vanished Originals*.

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Nineteen thirty-two was the year when F. R. Leavis published his *New Bearings in English Poetry* and began publishing *Scrutiny*, while T. S. Eliot in the same year assembled his *Selected Essays*. I think Leavis at the time was more a British than an American phenomenon; Eliot's work created strong stirrings, not just among young people, but through the academic community generally. F. O. Matthiessen was a persuasive early advocate, and the poetry, just then starting to be anthologized (and therefore annotated), fascinated by its difficulty. Still, neither Leavis nor Eliot (nor, for that matter, Richards) was perceived as a direct threat to the historical method; in the early 1930s their work had not yet had any visible effect on the courses being offered or the approach to literature being followed. And if this was true in the advanced Ivy League, it was even more startlingly true in small colleges and backwater locations, where the word *critic* was likely to mean George Saintsbury and Mark Pattison, with William Dean Howells and Brander Matthews as the last-word, up-to-the-minute modernists.

A course specially designed for English majors in Columbia College was titled "Historical Bases of English Literature"; it was actually a course in the history department, equally available to history majors, and largely staffed by historians. The chronological "Survey of English Literature" was a three-year sequence, which began with a review of the classical and medieval backgrounds, progressing as far as Shakespeare in the first year, to 1798 in the second year, and up to 1900 in the third year. (A similar survey course is given by most colleges to this day, but it is assigned far less time; the one at UCLA, for example, is completed in a single three-quarter year, generally the sophomore year. The Columbia survey *began* in sophomore year and concluded on graduation day.) American literature bulked very small in the curriculum of fifty years ago: a single two-semester course titled "American Life and Letters" was taught at Columbia—jointly, by a professor of English literature and a professor of history. As for modern literature, neither the survey nor the curriculum in general paid much attention to it. I find the Columbia catalogue for 1935 just one solitary course labeled "modern." That was Mr. Odell's course in modern drama; and since that famous historian of the New York stage was an indefatigable first-nighter, "modern" in the course title must have implied some really up-to-the-minute material. There was also, in the comparative literature annex offered by the department of English, a one-semester course chastely described as "Literary Tendencies Since 1900."

The historical approach could and sometimes did lead to solemn absurdities, especially when heavy-minded men joined to it a naive literalism that they thought somehow "scientific." I recall reading a scholarly article on *Beowulf* in which the author tried, with the help of

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his school's wrestling coach, to demonstrate that Beowulf did in Grendel with a half nelson. There really were professors who lectured for forty-eight minutes out of fifty on the biographical trivia (laundry lists and other memorabilia) of their chosen poets, then devoted a few hasty afterthoughts to the poems themselves—paraphrasing them (crudely enough, as a rule) and declaring them masterpieces, or citing some earlier writer who had so described them. Unimaginative pedants, whom we had then in about the same proportion as now, devoted themselves to questions such as, How many children had Lady Macbeth? and What proportion of Robert Louis Stevenson's sentences were periodic?

But these are the horror stories. Most of the teachers with whom I studied as an undergraduate, and with whom I later associated, were sensible and often sensitive men who tried to make independent judgments of the literary works they discussed. (By "tried" I do not imply the slightest condescension. They tried, as we all try; to what extent any of us succeed, who can say with confidence?) The historical approach was not for most of them any sort of straitjacket; there were too many different forms it could take, and there was too little interest in alternate methodologies. The most you could say was that the historical approach, being so generally accepted, tended to cast other considerations into the shade. It also shed a gentle blight on the present, which as inchoate and unformed history seemed less than worthy of academic study.

Not that the instructors of my youth were uninterested in modern literature or uninformed about it; the intellectually lively among them thought it important to keep up, and not just from a sense of duty. At a time when Mann, Gide, and Joyce were still publishing, when Virginia Woolf, James Branch Cabell, H. L. Mencken, and Sinclair Lewis were daily fare, people did not need the inducement of college credit to keep contemporary. Still on my shelves is the first Modern Library edition of *The Magic Mountain* (1932), which I bought (for seventy-two cents, as a note on the flyleaf reminds me) and read in a daze of enchantment—I think classroom discussion of it would have struck me as gross, if not a violation. Perhaps making modern literature a subject has eliminated something intangible that previously had made it an adventure. It seems to me that modern undergraduates do less exploratory reading on their own; they follow fads, but (unless I am mistaken) they do not do much free swimming in the stream of current production.

(I note, in passing, that there is already a book out on postcontemporary fiction; perhaps young people are daunted by the thought that after they have read all the contemporary fiction, there will remain a world of postcontemporary fiction, explored and familiar to a professor—

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catalogued, dissected, already dead, even before being born.)

In the 1930s the historical approach prevailed; and I confess to feeling, even now, that there is no more convenient or natural way to arrange the mass of materials that falls under the heading of English literature. There are a lot of paths that bring one closer to the individual work of literature, and a lot of alternate schemes for categorizing literary works—schemes that come closer than brute chronology to putting like with like. But there is an advantage to an order that is found, not made. You know its shape in advance, when it is most useful to you; there is just enough energy in the developmental analogy to let it suggest, but not compel. Still, regardless of its virtues or defects, the history of literature has occupied steadily less time and attention over the years—in some graduate schools, it seems to have become altogether residual. Among the consequences may be a literary perspective close to high myopia. Lately, one of my colleagues was interviewing, with the idea of offering him a job, a recently capped doctor from a respectable university. The man's specialty was—let us say, just to be inaccurate—the novels of Nabokov. Inevitably the question came up about whether the applicant was prepared to teach anything else; it appeared he was not. That could perhaps have happened any time in the past fifty years, but it seems particularly contemporary because of the wide freedom to pick and choose from among undergraduate electives together with the high degree of specialization permitted in graduate schools after the first stages.

As for the actual coming of the New Criticism, I don't recall it being a particularly stormy or dramatic change in the intellectual weather. Because of Cleanth Brooks and John Crowe Ransom, I am sure that we read our texts more scrupulously; but for all that, we did not throw away our history books. Close study of poetic texts in terms of their verbal energies and symbolic structure was perfectly compatible with what I had learned as an undergraduate, while the study of drama and fiction was touched only tangentially by the new approach. It is not my recollection that the issue roused fanatical passions; rather, history and criticism were accepted as two different ways to reach two different sorts of valid truth about literature.

The other major critical revolution of my time has also been peaceful (certainly, if compared with some of the literary gladiatorial shows chronicled by the elder D'Israeli)—yet with a difference. The structuralists and deconstructionists seem more isolated—whether by their humid dialect or their special preoccupations or because they are trying to work a deeper change in our thinking about literature. They communicate less effectively with those who are not of their persuasion; they get compartmentalized. I do not underestimate the gentle, serpen-

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tine magnetism of Paul de Man, but the second-string deconstructionists come out of another drawer altogether. In their professional lucubrations I often cannot follow these disciples at all, but I am bemused by the fact that on common topics several of them have appeared to me the very reverse of profound. Unless they do something for us in a literary way, and pretty soon, I suspect these pseudowizards will distract themselves into their own verbal cocoons, and there wizzle up. Something like this happened, if I'm not mistaken, with the New Humanist movement, which blew up out of Yale and Princeton in the 1920s, made its pother, and quietly subsided into the memories of antiquarians like myself.

Two of the curricular options that have burgeoned over the past fifty years are creative writing and comparative literature. Neither was unknown in 1932, but on the scale now practiced they were rare indeed. The University of Iowa undertook a major writing program as early as 1936, and progressive schools such as Bard and Bennington gave extensive instruction in the practice of literature, but they were the exceptions. Columbia College offered a single course in the writing of fiction (it was titled "Project Course in Composition"), and I found it very useful—a single term's work demonstrated to my full satisfaction that I had no gift whatever that way. But the idea that one could take a battery of courses in the writing of poetry, fiction, and drama, first at the introductory, then at the intermediate, advanced, and graduate levels—and under the guidance of instructors with no other responsibilities!—would have boggled our minds. Writing readable fiction or poetry, we supposed, was a talent almost as exceptional as the ability to perform a Bach partita for violin unaccompanied, and as ill suited to development in the classroom. Four or five of my college contemporaries became well-known writers, but at Columbia they practiced their craft for the college newspaper, the literary magazine, and the college humor magazine. I do not say this was better than the current widespread arrangement of creative writing classes—about which the worst thing is the indecently complacent title—but it was certainly very different.

The glimmer of a comparative literature program was also present fifty years ago, first in the general assumption that a student of English literature would demonstrate decent proficiency in a couple of other languages, and second in the program for the discussion of "great books," which flourished at Columbia, Chicago, and a few other universities around the country. At Columbia it was known as the "Colloquium": limited to juniors and seniors, it met once a week (at night, to keep it open-ended) with twenty students and two instructors. Quite simply, it was the most extraordinary intellectual experience of my life. I know many people who think the same, and the only reason I can imagine why the course is not more widespread is that it is very

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expensive. Two instructors for twenty students represents a price in manpower that few institutions want to pay. Perhaps because they put so much into the Colloquium (though the classics, history, and philosophy departments contributed, too), the English department devoted very little manpower to the tiny adjunct specifically labeled "Comparative Literature." Six semesters of work were offered. A separate department with a regular faculty, a full program of courses, a budget, and all the rest—such things did not exist either on the undergraduate or graduate level. To this day, UCLA has no undergraduate program in comparative literature, and for two interlocking, compelling reasons: it is hard to recruit the requisite number of undergraduates capable of reading several foreign literatures in the original; and undergraduates who take a program of reading foreign books in English translation will be totally unprepared for real work in comparative literature, if they want to go on to graduate school. Some colleges have not been impressed by these arguments, and their undergraduate programs in comparing English translations with one another have continued to operate.

Discounting as best I can the operations of nostalgia, I think that in 1932 the high schools were doing a better job of teaching students to write clear, workmanlike English prose than they are nowadays. The University of California accepts directly only the top 12.5 percent of the state's high school graduates; but I have encountered young people in the university's classrooms who told me that until they took my course, they had never before been asked to write a paper of any sort. They did not seem to think my demands unreasonable; they recognized that their preparation was faulty. But what I was now asking appeared to them, wholly unprepared as they were, as difficult as if I had asked them to scale, bare-handed, the Sears Tower. I have also encountered juniors and seniors, majoring in literature, who had passed an impressive array of courses in their specialty and yet could neither spell, express their thoughts coherently, nor observe the most rudimentary rules of English syntax. At Columbia College in 1932, the rule was that everybody, not just English majors, everybody had to write in one supervised hour five hundred words of literate prose on an impromptu topic. Those who failed had to try again; there was a noncredit course to help them. In principle, if a student had not cleared the hurdle by the end of his college career, he got no degree. I believe the rule was bent for some members of the team that beat Stanford in the Rose Bowl game of 1933, but I am quite sure that applying it today with any severity would produce a shambles in most of the nation's colleges and universities.

Most colleges deplore the level of undergraduate literacy and blame the high schools for it—or the boob tube, or some more amorphous scapegoat. Occasionally they put into effect crash writing programs to

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improve the situation. But teaching the basic writing skills to a large number of college students is an expensive proposition. Weekly themes are all right, but a theme for every meeting of the class is better; and it is not enough for an instructor to scrawl in the margin such abbreviations as "awk" and "coh." The student has to be shown his errors and some of the ways to avoid them—it's a laborious, one-on-one, time-consuming process. Too often the teacher in these crash writing programs is a harried teaching assistant who still has serious trouble of his own with the reference of pronouns. I wish I could be sure that the eminent professors under whom these hapless TAs are studying were themselves masters of a creditable prose style. No doubt some of the brethren were always less eloquent than others; I observe today, especially among devotees of the latest French critical gambits, a deliberate cultivation of turgid and contorted prose that, for all I know, may conceal profundities, but does so all too successfully. Publishers tell me that books of literary criticism, especially when composed by these pundits of deconstruction, are less welcome than they used to be. The fact, so far as it is a fact, does not much surprise me; work written deliberately to defy decipherment is not going to sell widely at the current cost of books. What effect the new autotelic, inarticulate criticism will have on the ancient maxim of "publish or perish" remains to be seen.

Without either dismay or enthusiasm, I recognize the entry into humanistic studies of a measure of mechanization. Computers have produced admirable concordances and card catalogues, which are or ought to be the marvel of the world. The National Union Catalogue, when linked into an efficient interlibrary loan system, gives one amazing access to facilities that used to be much more limited. Mechanical collators and word processors make possible the preparation of texts unprecedentedly accurate and sometimes unprecedentedly elaborate. The intoxicating prospect of recording every last variant in every last copy of every edition of an enormous text has had to be qualified by practicalities. Mechanical copying machines seem to me another two-faced invention. They save much drudgery but, when used indiscriminately, may choke the researcher with a clutter of undigested and indigestible materials. Microfilms and microfiche are evidently librarians' conveniences; I have learned to live with them, but without much exuberance. Computer terminals hooked into information banks are, I am told, the wave of the future, but the prospect does not please me very much. For sheer convenience and accessibility, for versatility in the ways it can be used, I do not expect anything in my time to equal the familiar book. It is portable, it can be annotated, it can exist as well in a single copy as in thousands, it does not require a mechanism to receive it. An excellent invention; I expect it to endure.

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A major change in the profession has resulted from the enormous growth in the availability of grant and research money from outside the university. Faculty research councils we have always had and still have; it is the outside money, government money especially, that has been a novelty. For years after its creation in 1924, the Guggenheim Foundation was the major source of funding for work in the humanities. (Before that writers often sought for, and even got, patrons; for a while, Otto Kahn patronized Hart Crane.) In comparison with the number of applicants, Guggenheims, though generous, were few, as they still are; most teachers planned on doing their research and writing either while teaching, over summer vacation, or on sabbatical time. When the government instituted Fulbright programs just after the Second World War, and National Endowment for the Humanities programs in 1965, the grant money available to humanists multiplied manyfold. Obviously, its distribution presented problems, and it would be idle to pretend they were all solved. The people who got grants were sometimes just good grant-getters. Recognizing that fact, artful authors started to compile little books of instruction in the craft of plum gathering, and grants officers appeared on many campuses to help the retiring, uncourtly scholar get his share of the boodle. The logic which decrees that someone who's had several grants already is a proven winner and therefore deserves another was sometimes too much respected. The best and brightest in the "good" schools on both coasts got perhaps more than their share of the Guggenheims, ACLS's, NEH's, and Fulbrights. But we have to recognize that if they did so, it was the profession itself that was largely responsible. Professors serve on the committees, write the innumerable, identical letters of recommendation, and control the distribution of grants, just as they also make tenure and promotion decisions. I would not have it otherwise, yet I am not sure the profession always acts with that independence from cliques, fads, and snobbish values for which one would hope. As far as federal money goes, a new austerity may limit if not solve the problem.

More generally, I think large sums of research money, large departments operating under complex regulations (often government imposed), and what can be thumbnailed as the machinery of academic existence have brought to the fore new social types. Administration used to be a kind of Chiltern Hundreds to which senior staff members were retired when they had written their books and grown tired of teaching. It was a harmless, dignified, and not very strenuous way for an academic to fill the last years in harness. Rules governing freedom of information and equal opportunity, combined with multiplying committees and democratic procedures with all the review and appeal processes they entail, have enormously complicated the administrative chore. (For a brief

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period, there was a move to have students share actively in the decision-making process; as soon as they found out what a drag it was, most of the zing went out of *that* revolution.) On the whole, when I think of some of the paternalistic old duffers who used to occupy, without filling, the chairman's place, I am disposed to see at least as much good as bad in the change. But it is a real change. Chairpersoning is now the full-time concern of alert young people who, except for the small sums in which they deal, might as well be junior partners in a Philadelphia law firm. I can think of at least half a dozen former colleagues who I am sure are more familiar with *Robert's Rules of Order* than with Keats's ode "On a Grecian Urn."

Perhaps because no single methodology is accepted today as authoritative, we do not seem to have Grand Old Men anymore, in the mold of Kittredge at Harvard. Every university used to have one of the sort—magisterial, opinionated, magnificent. It is my own opinion that we are well rid of the type, that at his best he was a genial old windbag, at his worst a real mind killer. (I am not talking about Kittredge personally, on whom I never laid eyes, but about a generally familiar social type.) Putting the merits of the case aside, his disappearance is a notable social fact.

About the great burgeoning of what can only be called—lumping a great many disparate items together—minority literature courses, I expect the jury is still out. The fact is patent. Many departments now offer a rainbow of courses in literature written by women, by homosexuals of either persuasion, by Jews, by blacks, by Hispanics, or by Indians. Other peripheral courses, just as numerous, concern themselves with particular literary or subliterary modes (science fiction, murder mystery, kiddie lit, comic books, et cetera); some limit themselves to a particular approach (psychoanalytic, Marxian, semiotic, et cetera); still others invoke comparisons with the allied arts (movies, painting, architecture, music). A certain number of these courses, to be known at a glance by their grossly inflated enrollments, are out-and-out "gut"—also known as "Mickey Mouse"—courses, which practically guarantee a high mark in return for no work. They have the advantage of being easy to teach and cheap to staff; and the exaggerated enrollments they attract can be used to argue, with numerically minded administrators, the need for more staff. It is democratic, I suppose, to offer something for every student, however close to total illiteracy. On the other hand, the profession seems in some of these courses to come close to admitting it has nothing to teach. If we approach this self-abolishing admission from two directions at once—through catering to student laziness and deconstructing all literary texts down to the same meaningless non-propositions—we may reach our goal sooner than we think.

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There is a strong literary argument for some of the special-approach courses; we do not know what is in the approach, and we do not know what is in the text till we bring them into strenuous conjunction. But minority-literature courses limit themselves by some personal character of the author, not by a quality of the literature, which they tend to treat as a secondary symptom of a basic personal condition. They are covert and sometimes unashamed sociology, and for their position in English curricula there is not really much to be said. On the other hand, there is no question that these courses have done something to redress a long-standing social imbalance in departments of literature. In the recruitment, where necessary, of people qualified to teach them, they have widened the once rather nasty elitist outlook of the profession, to its unmistakable advantage.

This was less necessary, or so it seems to me, in the addition of women to the staff, than elsewhere. Women, so far as my perhaps untypical experience goes, were welcome to the profession; indeed, as they often made up a good proportion of our students (at Cornell, for instance), they might have been consciously sought as teachers. Nor were they limited to inferior jobs. At the University of Wisconsin forty years ago, who was more respected and admired than Helen C. White, Ruth Wallerstein, and Madeleine Doran? Nobody at Columbia out-ranked Marjorie Hope Nicolson; nobody at UCLA measured up to Lily B. Campbell. At many universities, because of nepotism regulations, husband and wife could not be on the promotion ladder at the same time; in at least one instance, I know of a husband who parked himself in a lectureship while his wife continued up to full professor.

I don't say women did not often face prejudice and hostility, as well as their special disadvantages of cultural conditioning, especially when getting started in the profession, and obviously in some schools more than others. But their obstacles (perhaps because of traditions of teaching in grade and high schools) were less pronounced in college teaching than elsewhere—certainly far less in the humanities than in the sciences. They passed the barriers earlier, if only in limited numbers. I could take women for granted as teachers and colleagues decades before I had a black associate or knew that the Hispanic novel in English required a course carrying college credit, taught by an ethnic simon-pure. (The locution betrays me into impoliteness: I never take women for granted. One of my friends who was being considered for a job at a women's college asked a man who was already teaching there what it was like teaching exclusively women. "Oh," said the fellow, "it's perfectly natural; after a while you don't notice the difference." "That," said my friend, "is what I'm afraid of." As it happened he didn't take the job—or get it, I'm not sure which.)

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Popularity contests are a degrading aspect of the new-style departments of English and are largely incompatible with maintaining intellectual standards. The practice of having students evaluate their instructors—the results directly influencing career decisions—evidently accounts for the extraordinary inflation of grades since the late 1960s; it may account as well for the bazaar and rummage-sale look of some department curricula. One does not know exactly how to balance these issues. Arbitrary and completely unchecked power over the student certainly should not belong to the instructor; on the other hand, an untenured instructor with a wife and kids is in a very vulnerable position if a student to whom he has given a poor grade wants to take disproportionate revenge. Again, students do have interests to which departments should respond—but not, one hopes, at the expense of a balanced intellectual diet. I note as a fact worthy of consideration that UCLA is one of the few universities in the country where undergraduate English majors are required to read appreciable amounts of Shakespeare and either Milton or Chaucer; evidence is that they are not distressed by the requirement and find the reading itself as stimulating as one could want.

Across the years, the numbers of students and the numbers of courses have multiplied amazingly. Including all the minority-lit, pop-lit, kiddie-lit, American-lit, comp-lit, and creative writing courses, but not graduate courses, teacher-training courses, or courses in English as a second language, UCLA currently offers about one hundred fifteen separate courses, many in two or three sections, and of course the elementary composition courses in several hundred sections. The comparable figure for Columbia College in 1935 was a scant forty. The figures have to be adjusted for differences between the quarter and the semester system; there is also an immense difference in the number of the clientele. UCLA presently has an amazing eleven hundred undergraduate English majors; Columbia College in 1935 can hardly have had more than one hundred fifty. Hence, though the disparity in the number of courses offered is large, it is not as large as the raw numbers suggest. On the other hand, who are all those eleven hundred people, and what in the world is to become of them?

Close reading and the disintegration of texts—techniques of literary study much in evidence these days—may be among the reasons behind a modern tendency to abbreviate and randomize the course of graduate instruction. Both activities depend on the exercise of a ready wit, a native ingenuity, that may be sharpened and refined but can be neither acquired where it does not already exist nor learned through a long, cumulative course of study. In the 1930s, the doctoral program was brutally and often unnecessarily extended: one heard of wretches who had been working at their degrees—and who, for lack of them, had been

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kept in the lowest-paid ranks of the profession—for ten or a dozen years. (The practice of "up-or-out," cruel as it may often be, has its compensations: sixty-year-old instructors used to be, if not frequent, at least occasional specters of the academies. The present mode of hiring a young person without prospect of tenure, working him for three cheap years, and then passing him along to another temporary job—and so on, ad infinitum—is hardly less cruel. About all you can say for it is that it spreads the guilt. There is a slow accumulation of wounds, and most of those who inflicted them do not have to watch the victim bleed to death.) It was a mark of the importance assigned to the degree that the dissertation had to be published; it was supposed to be a contribution to learning and as such made available to the community of the learned. The very statement of this ideal is today almost comic. Not very many dissertations are contributions to learning; sometimes they are demonstrations of cleverness and sometimes simply of student docility and directorial patience. The last thing anyone should want is to have them published. Here, if anywhere, microfilm finds its redeeming function as a decent way of burying doctoral dissertations.

I think it was in the 1950s that some aberrant social scientists forecasted such a scandalous dearth of Ph.D.'s that the assembly line—they said—had to be accelerated, lest a shortage of philosophical doctors bring the nation to its knees. Hence such grotesque schemes as Cornell's six-year Ph.D. program—from freshman to doctorate in six breathless, thoughtless years—and the less drastic acceleration program at Yale. Lord knows, the illusion of a boom market for humanistic Ph.D.'s has long since gone the way of Alf Landon buttons, but the truncated doctoral programs remain—the dissertation being, very often, nothing but a slightly extended term paper. Among other pressures of a tight job market, one notes the frequent situation where the candidate has secured a position on the promise that the degree will be completed by next fall. Under those circumstances, only a brute of a supervisor will stand on the fact that Section III is an incoherent and illiterate mess. He cannot hold up the thesis, he cannot with self-respect let it go through—in effect, and sometimes quite literally, he will rewrite it himself. What this demonstrates about, and more particularly *to*, the candidate, I'd better not say. For the supervisor it is sometimes the path of least resistance.

Numbers, numbers, numbers. A basic fact about the profession of teaching literature is that more of us are engaged in it now than ever before. In 1932 the Modern Language Association numbered a bit more than four thousand members; now, about fifty years later, there are a bit fewer than thirty thousand. Everybody knows we have overproduced ourselves; there are, by a long shot, more teachers of literature than there

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are jobs. That means heavy pressure up and down the line—on graduate students to do something smart in hope of landing a first job, on the untenured staff to make tenure, on the tenured staff to appoint not just good people but the best. Since a major criterion for appointment and promotion is publication, there is tremendous pressure on everyone to find something new and gaudy to say. Our increasing numbers are a response—excessive at the moment, to be sure—to steadily accelerating demand; the Byzantine subtlety of our current criticism may, equally, be a response to increasing numbers.

Fifty years ago the American population of college and university students amounted to no more than a million and a quarter; the equivalent figure for 1981 is over nine million. Of our high school graduates over 50 percent go on to some form of higher education; if that is not absolutely the highest percentage in the world, it is one of the highest. (I know there has been a reaction lately against going to college: it's a big financial outlay, and the tangible returns have been much overplayed. Besides, there's such a thing as a failed education, and the unhappy victim of it is far worse off than if he had not pushed himself, or been pushed, toward work for which he had no natural bent. Still, the big numbers are not yet affected.) Inevitably, a good number of these millions who pass through the educational machine wind up half-educated or worse. We don't winnow them severely; we never face them with a make-or-break situation like the tripos in England or the bac in France. A clever, elusive, lazy student can graduate from a college, and from a graduate school if he wants, knowing less than when he entered. Many do. English departments get their share, perhaps more than their share, of the floaters. But the glory of the system, or rather nonsystem, is the self-directed, self-motivated young person who swims through the warm soup of American education to a goal of his own making. To their delight, he uses his instructors to educate himself. I think there are just about as many of these rare and wonderful phenomena as there ever were, maybe more. We get no credit for what they do—unless, indeed, a little credit attaches to shutting up and getting out of the way. But then that is one of the things a nonsystem does best.

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A Recital by Rudolf Serkin

ELDER OLSON

Music, oldest of arts,
Unlike all others
Moves immediately upon the mind,
Presents no Lear for pity,
No awakening Adam for wonder;
We exult or grieve, unable to say why;

Nor can we say how it was
That suffering, thought, toil
Became the fleeting touch of a fingertip,
How the insensate instrument
Shook the insensate air
To make passion into sound, sound into passion,

How a man became music,
We became that music,
All the many listeners became one,
Differences like discords
Resolved in concord;

Nor how through such tremblings of common air
The splendid Presences were summoned then
To speak in tongues unknown yet understood
Of what Man might have been
And still might be.

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The Modern Movement on the Eve of the Second World War

HILTON KRAMER

THE TERMINAL EVENTS OF ART HISTORY do not always coincide with the boundaries or bench marks of political life, but in the twentieth century, alas, they very often have. For this reason, the history of art in this century—the art of the modern movement—may be divided into two distinct periods. The first, which began with the Western world at peace at the turn of the century, came to an end with the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939 and the fall of Paris in June 1940.

To this forty-year period belongs the genesis of all those movements—Fauvism, Cubism, and Surrealism in France, Expressionism in Germany, Futurism in Italy, Constructivism and Suprematism in Russia, and the birth of abstract art and of Dada in several countries all at once—that gave to art in this century its fundamental modalities. It was, for the most part, a period of European domination in the visual arts. It was also a period in which modernism remained a specialized interest of the intellectual elite—a matter of tremendous importance to artists, intellectuals, and their allies among the enlightened, or "advanced," members of the societies in which they worked, but opposed by educated opinion generally and without a significant public following.

The Second World War marked the end of European domination in the visual arts and the beginning of a new era in American accomplishment and influence. It also marked the beginning of a new era in the public recognition of modern art. Before the war, the modern movement in art still occupied a very uncertain place in the official culture of the Western democracies—the culture that was taught in the schools, written about in books, and exhibited in museums. After the war, though it remained controversial and would continue to inspire skepticism among die-hard exponents of "tradition," modern art became more and more integrated into the mainstream of cultural life. Now in the last quarter of the twentieth century it is triumphantly displayed in the museums, vied

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for in expensive auction sales, praised in the press, studied in the schools, and subsidized by government agencies. The art scene as we know it today—and not only in America and Europe, but wherever else in the world the free expression of aesthetic intelligence is allowed to run its course without political, religious, or social constraints—is essentially the creation of this second, post–World War II period.

The coming of the war, which proved to be decisive in shattering the life of art in Europe and shifting its center to the United States, was but the climax of a whole succession of menacing events. For throughout its history in the first four decades of the twentieth century, modern art had flourished in a Europe beset by fierce political upheavals, and these inevitably affected the very spirit in which the art was conceived. This was especially the case in the years following the First World War and the Russian Revolution, and gave to certain avant-garde movements—particularly to Dada, Constructivism, and Surrealism—a quasi-political character. Dada had begun as an antiwar movement. Constructivism was conceived in a spirit of radical utopianism, and Surrealism openly proclaimed itself to be "in the service" of revolution. The aesthetic consequences of these movements proved in the end to be separable from the political impulses that helped to inspire them, but they were born in an atmosphere of radical political ferment and owed to this circumstance much of the spirit that animated them.

It was not until the 1930s, however, that political events in Europe raised the grim possibility of the modern movement's complete destruction. It was one thing for art to oppose the society in which it was created: this presupposed a continuing freedom of action on the part of the artist. It was quite another thing for a society to oppose the art by employing violent political means. It was when this happened, and modern art fell under an official ban in both the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany and its practitioners had reason to fear for their lives, that it began to look as if the end of the whole modernist era might be at hand.

The crackdown had actually begun in the Soviet Union in the 1920s, and by the 1930s, when the doctrine of Socialist Realism was rigorously enforced, it was considered a crime against the Soviet state for anyone to produce an abstract painting or sculpture. After Hitler came to power in Germany in 1933, modern art was similarly proscribed in that country. But whereas in Stalin's Russia the offending objects were removed from public view and artists were terrorized into conforming to the new aesthetic doctrine sanctioned by the state, in Germany the campaign was carried an important step further. Huge public exhibitions were organized in order to dramatize the idea that modern art represented a dangerous form of moral degeneracy and political subversion.

The most spectacular of these exhibitions of modern art was the

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notorious "Entartete Kunst" ("Degenerate Art") show mounted in Munich in the summer of 1937. This may well have been the biggest exhibition of modern art ever assembled in a single place. During the 1920s, in the liberal atmosphere of the Weimar Republic, German museums had been the most receptive in the world to the innovations of modern art, and impressive public collections were established. In organizing the "Degenerate Art" exhibition, all the major museums in Germany were systematically stripped of these modernist works, and a total of more than sixteen thousand paintings, drawings, and sculptures by some fourteen hundred artists was brought together to show the public what "atrocities" had been committed against the German people in the name of modern art.

Virtually every important German artist of the modern period was abundantly represented—the Expressionist painter Emil Nolde by more than one thousand works, for example, and such celebrated figures as Lovis Corinth, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Erich Heckel, Max Pechstein, Otto Dix, Max Beckmann, and George Grosz, by hundreds each. Works by the leading foreign artists—Cézanne, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Picasso, Matisse, Chagall, and others—were likewise confiscated for the exhibition in which scurrilously-worded labels ridiculed the art and condemned the artists as enemies of the state. In a public speech that summer, Hitler promised to wage a "merciless war of destruction" against modern art, and he meant what he said.

Fortunately for posterity, the Nazi regime was corrupt as well as evil, and not averse to making a profit out of what it publicly condemned. Following the "Degenerate Art" exhibition, arrangements were made to sell off as many works as possible through dealers in Switzerland. In addition, there were many private sales—and bribes paid to have works shipped out of the country—never officially reported. Still other works were hidden away to protect them from confiscation. So the complete destruction that Hitler envisioned for modern art in Germany was mercifully incomplete, and some of the art survived. But many works were actually burned on government order by the Berlin fire brigade in the spring of 1939.

By that time, a sizable number of artists, critics, art historians, dealers, and collectors had fled Germany, taking with them whatever they could. Some of these émigrés were to become important figures in the American art scene of the 1940s and 1950s, for the United States became the principal haven for artist-refugees in flight from the Nazi reign of terror. Indeed, American art after 1939 owed a great deal to the presence of these and other European exiles forced by malevolent circumstance into seeking refuge in the United States. It was this forced emigration that helped to establish New York, from the early 1940s

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onward, as the international capital of the modern movement—a position it has continued to occupy to the present day.

At the end of the 1930s, however, the unquestioned capital of modern art was still Paris. It was in Paris that the major myths and legends of the modern movement were spawned, and the principal reputations made. Throughout the civilized world French art had long enjoyed an influence and prestige unrivaled by the art of any other country, and by the 1930s the leading figures of the School of Paris—as the generation of Picasso and Matisse came to be called—were widely recognized, by artists and connoisseurs if not yet by the general public, as the living heirs of a great tradition.

The School of Paris was not exclusively French, however. Earlier in the century young artists had come to Paris from every part of Europe, and from the United States too, in search of new ideas and a congenial, creative, noncensorious atmosphere in which to pursue the unorthodox life of art. Paris offered to foreigners and natives alike the freedom of a cosmopolitan culture and a bohemian style of life—a freedom of the spirit untethered to the narrow conventions that prevailed elsewhere in the world. It was, preeminently, the place where art and ideas about art were taken seriously, were most advanced, and were most seriously pursued. It was the place where critical standards were set, where a new artist could most effectively measure his accomplishments against the best work of his time and find a community—at first minuscule, perhaps, but intelligent and informed—for his own art. Paris was, in short, the home of the avant-garde. For this reason, too, it was the place to which enlightened critics and scholars, progressive museum curators and venturesome collectors, and the intellectually curious from other countries came to discover, to savor, and sometimes to buy the new art.

The brutal suppression of modern art in Russia and Germany, together with the rise of fascism in Italy and the civil war in Spain, had the effect of accelerating this artistic migration to Paris, and modernist art continued to prosper there even in the shadow of war—a war that would, in June 1940, bring the armies of Nazi Germany marching into the French capital itself. Yet before the war broke out, Paris remained the scene of ambitious artistic adventures and ebullient aesthetic spirits. As if defying fate, art persisted in flaunting its right to be difficult and outrageous—to scandalize conventional opinion with a full-blown display of its own imaginative freedom.

In this respect, the 1938 International Exhibition of Surrealism may be taken as a symbolic event—at once an impudent "reply" to Hitler's "Degenerate Art" show and a kind of "last hurrah" on the part of the Paris avant-garde before the grim reality of war sent many of its members scurrying for safety abroad.

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Surrealism had been one of the dominant movements in Paris since the early twenties when, as an offshoot of Dada, it came into existence with a program exalting dreams and the unconscious and espousing a doctrine of revolution that owed as much to the celebration of eroticism and the cultivation of the irrational as it did to radical political ideas. Like Dada, it was aggressively anti-bourgeois in its social attitudes. It also adopted a somewhat cavalier attitude toward some of the sacred tenets of modernism itself. For unlike the more hermetic avant-garde groups then devoted to upholding the inviolable purity of abstract art, Surrealism was "literary" as well as raucous. It went in for jokes, riddles, and myths; it was interested in poetic symbols, bizarre objects, and sexual puns; and by such means it blithely restored to the visual arts the kind of representational subject matter, narrative imagery, and illusionist space that purist exponents of abstraction—who naturally felt that *they* represented the true avant-garde—regarded as aesthetic sacrilege.

Surrealism thus made a great show of being rebellious and shocking—and not only in relation to public opinion, which it deliberately set out to scandalize, but also in relation to the kind of serious artistic opinion that had been nurtured on the rigorous taste and severe formal procedures of Cubism and Constructivism and the abstract art that derived from them.

This penchant for scandal had won for Surrealism a great deal of public attention, and by the 1930s the movement had become something of a darling in the world of fashion and chic taste—a fact that was fully exploited when it came time to organize the International Exhibition of Surrealism in 1938. Opening in January of that year in the spacious quarters of the posh Galerie Beaux Arts, this show was something more than an exhibition of painting and sculpture. True, many of the leading artists of the movement—among the best known were Salvador Dali, Max Ernst, André Masson, Man Ray, Jean Arp, and Joan Miró—were represented by such traditional objects, but it was not these that gave the show its special character or caused the biggest sensation.

For the entire exhibition was conceived as an integrated "environment," as we should now call it, and its outstanding features bore little resemblance to painting or sculpture. Installed in the lobby, as an introduction to further wonders to come, was Dali's *Rainy Taxi*, a macabre construction consisting of an actual old taxicab inside which were two mannequins—one, adorned with a shark's head, in the driver's seat; the other, a disheveled blonde female figure in evening dress, placed in the back seat where it reposed among real heads of lettuce and a colony of live snails. The interior of the cab was equipped with an elaborate water system that caused a steady, drenching "rain" to fall on the occupants.

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Beyond the *Rainy Taxi* in the lobby was an area dubbed *Surrealist Street*. This consisted of an ample passageway presided over by some twenty female figures, actually wax dummies vividly transformed into Surrealist fantasy-images. Artists competed to outdo each other in grotesque invention. Max Ernst, for example, created the figure of a widow in mourning, draped in black veils while trampling a male figure lying sprawled on the floor. Man Ray equipped the coiffure of his figure with clay pipes containing iridescent bubbles. André Masson was said to have triumphed in this particular contest of grotesques by placing his dummy's head in a cage, masking her mouth with black velvet, and attaching to it a flower (a pansy, and thus a pun on the word *pensée*, or thought) for lips; otherwise the figure was naked except for a G-string studded with glass eyes.

Surrealist Street, suggestive of a fantastic brothel, led into an immense, darkened hall—the creation of Marcel Duchamp, one of the original founders of Dada who was then an enthusiastic collaborator in Surrealist escapades and who would soon become an important influence, indeed something of a deity, in the postwar world of American art. Duchamp transformed the main space of the Galerie Beaux Arts into an eerie but hilarious grotto, its floor thickly carpeted with dead leaves and its ceiling hung with twelve hundred sacks of coal. This space also contained, in addition to objects of art just barely visible, a little pool of water lilies, a perforated iron brazier, and, in each of its four corners, gigantic and luxurious beds made up with embroidered satin counterpanes. The entire atmosphere was permeated by what were called "the perfumes of Brazil"—that is, the smell of coffee being roasted behind a screen. And in case there was any doubt about the note of conscious historical defiance in the exhibition, a loudspeaker filled the air with a recording of the German army's parade march.

This was mockery on a grand comic scale—no group of artists seems to have had as much sheer fun in their work as the Surrealists—and the show proved to be a sensation. The press attacked it, and the public flocked to it—eager to be shocked. In Surrealist terms, certainly, the exhibition was a resounding success. But circumstance conspired to make it the kind of success that sounded a note of farewell to the whole freewheeling era in which Surrealism and its rival avant-garde group flourished between the wars. Little more than two years after the show closed at the Galerie Beaux Arts, the real German army was playing its parade march on the boulevards of occupied Paris.

The situation in the United States was very different. There were no avant-garde escapades on the scale of the International Exhibition of Surrealism. But neither was there any political program of organized

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violence threatening the existence of modern art in America. On the contrary, the government in Washington—through the Works Progress Administration (WPA)—had in 1935 established a Federal Art Project to aid artists of every persuasion who had been adversely affected by the economic conditions of the depression. This indirectly acted as a subsidy for a significant part of the struggling modern movement in America.

Moreover, new private institutions were being organized for the express purpose of collecting and exhibiting the masterworks of modern art. Of these institutions, undoubtedly the most important was the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Founded in 1929, it observed its tenth anniversary by moving into a splendid new building at 11 West Fifty-third Street—itself an example of the new modern architecture—just as Europe was being plunged into war. Thus, though America lacked the kind of trailblazing avant-garde culture that had made Paris the spiritual home of modernism, it was acquiring the means by which a new generation of artists—and a new public, too—would familiarize itself with the scope of the modernist achievement. This was to have significant consequences for the creation of new art in New York.

The initial approach of the Museum of Modern Art was extremely cautious, however. In the first decade of its existence, though it mounted important exhibitions of "Cubism and Abstract Art," "Fantastic Art, Dada, and Surrealism," and other avant-garde developments, the museum also showed a good many works of art that would not now be considered "modern" at all. Among them was an entire retrospective exhibition, in 1935, of the nineteenth-century American realist painter, George Caleb Bingham. Corot and Daumier, Winslow Homer and Thomas Eakins, were also among the nineteenth-century artists exhibited in these early years, and in its selection of living American artists the museum showed a distinct bias in favor of realistic and representational styles. The watercolors of Charles Burchfield were shown in 1930, there was a retrospective for Edward Hopper in 1933, and a show of Charles Sheeler in 1939. These are all artists of significant accomplishment, but they scarcely represented the cutting edge of modernist sensibility even in the 1930s.

The truth is, the Museum of Modern Art was at first hesitant and evasive about committing itself to American modernism and gave it little support. The museum's real interest, so far as painting and sculpture were concerned, lay in bringing the work of the European modernist masters to an American public scarcely acquainted with them. Among the many modernist painters then at work in the United States, for example, John Marin was the only one to be given a solo exhibition at the museum in its first decade. This occurred in 1936 when Marin, who

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had been showing in New York since 1909, was sixty-four years old. Oddly enough, the museum was a bit more adventurous in focusing on one of the outstanding young American photographers of the 1930s: twice in that decade, first in 1933 and again in 1938, it devoted one-man shows to the work of Walker Evans, even before the museum had officially established its own Department of Photography.

It was in the task of giving New York an intelligent account of the modern movement in Europe, and of assembling a permanent museum collection of painting and sculpture that would represent the movement by its peak achievements, that the Museum of Modern Art struggled to excel in this period. It was a slow process, however, and the museum's initial acquisitions policy was no less cautious than its exhibition program. Even in the field of modern European art, a good many of the first works to enter the collection fell into a category that Alfred H. Barr, Jr., the founding director of the museum, later described as "conservative but admirable."

Among these "conservative but admirable" works was the first major sculpture to enter the collection—Aristide Maillol's *Île de France* (1910), a bronze figure belonging to the venerable tradition of Mediterranean classicism. Among them, too, was the first painting the museum acquired—Edward Hopper's impeccably realistic *House by the Railroad* (1925). These actually preceded the museum's first Picasso—a gouache *Head* (1909), from the artist's early Cubist period—which came to the museum in 1930. The museum had opened its doors in 1929 with an exhibition of Cézanne, Gauguin, Seurat, and Van Gogh, and with the first large bequest it received two years later—the Lillie P. Bliss collection—it came into possession of significant examples of these and other "founding fathers" of the modern movement in the late nineteenth century. But the representation of what Barr himself called "the radical innovations of the twentieth century" remained pretty sparse until the later 1930s.

It was in the years 1934–1939 that the museum became consistently more daring in acquiring the difficult and then still very controversial masterworks of modern art. Among the many works that entered the museum collection in this five-year period were the following: Picasso's *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* and *Girl Before a Mirror*, Matisse's *Blue Window*, Brancusi's *Bird in Space*, Braque's *Oval Still Life*, Dali's *The Persistence of Memory*, Malevich's *White on White*, Rodchenko's *Non-Objective Painting: Black on Black*, Miró's *The Hunter*, Giacometti's *The Palace at 4 A.M.*, Rousseau's *The Sleeping Gypsy*, and similarly important productions by Mondrian, Klee, Arp, de Chirico, Kokoschka, and Ernst.

This is an impressive record of acquisitions—there was no museum

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in Europe to equal it—and it formed the basis of what remains today the finest single collection of modern painting and sculpture in the world. But it is worth noting that a significant part of the list—and a good part of what remains of permanent interest today—is made up of objects that had been created prior to the museum's existence. The museum was determinedly catching up on the European past, on a period that was drawing to a close in the 1930s. A sense of history—a sense of modern art *as* history—rather than a sense of contemporaneity dominated its decisions. And about this history the museum took a broad, ecumenical view, refusing to be drawn into the kind of sectarian exclusiveness that governed the combative life of avant-garde groups in Europe. In Paris the votaries of Constructivism and geometrical abstraction might look with disdain on the high jinks of the Surrealists, and the Surrealists might be vocal in their contempt for the "bourgeois" art of Matisse, but in New York the Museum of Modern Art remained aloof from such squabbles. Its policy was to embrace the whole spectrum of modernist achievement—unlike, for example, the Museum of Non-Objective Art, which was founded in New York in 1939 as a kind of shrine to abstract art. (Today, under the name of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, this institution follows a more eclectic policy, though its ideological origins may still be seen in the tendency to avoid most forms of contemporary figurative art.) The Museum of Modern Art was thus one of the first museums to take a synoptic and more purely curatorial view—at once informed, disinterested, and pluralistic—of the art of the twentieth century.

It was an attitude easier to sustain abroad in dealing with the past, however, than to implement at home in dealing with the present. When the museum organized an exhibition called "Art in Our Time" for its tenth anniversary in 1939, American art was represented for the most part by the same kind of representational work, both old and new, that the museum had favored throughout the 1930s. Not only Eakins and Homer but John Singer Sargent and John La Farge were among the nineteenth-century American painters in this show purporting to document the art of "our time" in the fourth decade of the twentieth century. The selection of living American artists, though it included such modernists as Stuart Davis and Alexander Calder, was heavily weighted in the direction of the realist, romantic, and regional styles very popular in America at that time. It was left to the European masters, from Cézanne and Picasso to Mondrian and the Surrealists, to represent the mainstream of modernism.

This was a course bound to offend the embattled native modernists, who felt betrayed by the very institution they had expected to champion "their" kind of art. The "Art in Our Time" exhibition brought this

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antagonism into the open. A group called the American Abstract Artists, which had been organized in 1936 for the purpose of advancing the cause of abstract art in the United States, issued a broadside that asked the question, "How Modern Is the Museum of Modern Art?" It was signed by fifty-two artists and caused the museum a good deal of embarrassment.

In the 1940s, the Museum of Modern Art would become a good deal more hospitable to American abstract art, and by the 1950s the museum was an open and energetic partisan of what came to be called the New York School. But in the period under discussion, the museum persisted in its policy of giving emphatic priority to Europe, and the nascent efforts of the younger generation of American avant-garde artists found little support on West Fifty-third Street. The reason, though never publicly avowed, was nonetheless clear. American abstract art was not at that time deemed sufficiently powerful or original to merit more vigorous support. As one of the museum's curators, James Thrall Soby, confided on another occasion: "You cannot possibly present twentieth-century American painting as we have presented School of Paris painting. The revolutionary impact is not there." This is a judgment that posterity has somewhat modified—for there was more going on in American art in the 1930s than the museum quite appreciated—but not essentially altered. Even the most advanced American art of the time was still largely tethered to European initiatives.

The living artist who had made the strongest "revolutionary impact" on the art of his time was undoubtedly Pablo Picasso, who in 1939 was fifty-eight years old and had long been one of the reigning masters of the School of Paris. So it was entirely appropriate for the Museum of Modern Art, at the end of the first decade of its existence, to mount a huge retrospective exhibition called "Picasso: Forty Years of His Art." In art it is accomplishment that counts, for only accomplishment serves as a creative model and inspiration. This exhibition probably made a more lasting contribution to the future of American art than it was then possible for any show of American art to make. Paradoxically, by neglecting American modernism in the 1930s the museum helped to establish the basis for its future growth.

This, then, was the situation of the modern movement on the eve of the Second World War. Modernism was still rampant in Western Europe, especially in Paris, but threatened with imminent political destruction; whereas in America the ground was being prepared for a new period of growth. The war, which brought so much death and suffering to Europe, gave to American art a new lease on life.

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What to Do When You Don't Live in a Golden Age

ROBERT NISBET

FIRST, BE FRUITLESS AND REIFY. Snuff out the lives of particulars through suffocation by structures and systems. Agree with Blake: "I must Create a System or be enslav'd by another Man's." Regard individuals and events as so many masterless dogs needing impoundment in a theory. The rage to reification, for pretending that life and meaning exist in the most boneless of abstractions, is a special mark of ages in history such as our own. *Grau ist alle theorie*, wrote Goethe, but you would never know it from the colored ribbons with which we bedizen our pet principles, laws, and axioms in the human sciences. With considerable reason has our epoch been called the Age of Reification.

Amusingly, the *Oxford English Dictionary* lists the word *reif* (or *rief*) just before *reification*, defining it as the act of robbery or as one who commits the robbery. Reification is in its way robbery: the stealing of life from the individual and the concrete in order to secrete it in some ontological invertebrate. Considering the combination of robbery and violence, we might even think of reification as mugging.

The great impetus toward reification came in the nineteenth century, especially in Hegel's Germany. Marx canonized reification when he declared in *Capital* that "individuals are dealt with only insofar as they are personifications of categories." Heaven knows, there are in those three turgid volumes more than enough spongy, hollow, and abstract nouns, starting with *capital*, *surplus value*, and *proletariat*. For the revolution-minded there is great advantage in reifying, for how can one lead a revolution against a host of individuals or a cloud of particulars? It is one thing to mutiny against a Captain Bligh, but for an honest-to-god revolution there must be a blob like *capitalism* to wave in front of intellectuals. Tocqueville correctly saw reification as one of the linguis-

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tic diseases of democracy. "Democratic writers are perpetually coining abstract words," he wrote in *Democracy in America*, "in which they sublimate into further abstraction the abstract terms of the language. Moreover, to render their mode of speech more succinct, they personify the object of these abstract terms and make it act like a real person." And in his *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, Tocqueville wrote of the philosophes: "Their very way of living led these writers to indulge in abstract theories and generalizations regarding the nature of government, and to place blind confidence in these. For . . . quite out of touch with practical politics, they lacked the experience which might have tempered their enthusiasm. . . . As a result, our literary men became much bolder in their speculations, more addicted to general ideas and systems. . . ."

But what Tocqueville addressed himself to is nothing compared to our age of reification. If the social sciences had not existed in this century, they would have had to be invented for the sake of the lust to reify. Economics became not the dismal but the pathetic science—pathetic in Ruskin's sense of the pathetic fallacy, endowing abstractions with animate being. But sociology and anthropology have not been dilatory. Lives of concrete human beings are slaughtered genocidally, leaving only interconnecting banks of system, structure, function, and the like. Once anthropologists were known as "fact-worshipping, curio-hunting and theory-dreading," but in the age of Levi-Strauss that characterization has to be reversed. I am inclined to think that the highest achievements of reification are to be found in such imposing thickets of abstraction as semiotics and hermeneutics, not to forget something known to its inmates as ethnomethodology.

Unquestionably, structuralism is the opiate of the reifying classes in our day. Whether a literary text, an act of murder, a job, or a marriage, everything, starting with individual volition, is buried in "structures." Seemingly, structures multiply sexually and asexually in the social sciences and humanities. One thinks back with some pleasure on the 1930s when there appeared to be libidinal cravings in certain Marxist structures for those of Freudian descent. But true marriage of Freud and Marx was not to be; techniques of reification were manifestly incompatible.

Structuralism is our Slough of Respond. How one structuralist responds to another is the stuff of social science and the humanities alike in widening areas of our culture. An awesome event any month is the response of an Althuserrian to a letter published by Godelier, itself a response to an article by a student of the late Talcott Parsons, which was stimulated by a Freudian structuralist's criticism of Claude Levi-Strauss, who is by any reckoning a superstar of structuralism and one of the grand masters of reification generally.

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An interesting question is—though one we cannot pursue at any length here—which has done the most to spread the epidemic of reification during the past fifty years, Marxism or Freudianism? At first sight, dialectical materialism, alienation, and class consciousness appear unbeatable. But once we have gazed for a few moments at the libido, the death wish, and the Oedipus complex, we are not so certain. Happily the late and unlamented Frankfort School, through its ingenious hybridizations, did much to reduce the natural struggle for survival between the two great reifiers, by making each seem, when not incomprehensible, quite boring.

Closely related to reification in our day is *ismatics*, the art and science of isms. The English language is far from alone in its twentieth-century wealth of isms. Where would French and German be without their rich deposits of *ismes* and *ismuses*? Two broad patterns of ismatizing are to be found. The first is eponymous, or let us say, eponismatic. Here the name of an individual receives the precious suffix, as in Millerism in nineteenth-century American religion, as in Darwinism, Marxism, Freudianism, Couéism, and the like. The Left is highly fertile, though by no means alone, in its spawning of eponisms. Think only of the mighty Marx, down through the anointed Lenin, to Trotsky in the pits—and the spate of isms that had such forgettable individuals as Schachtman and Weisbord in radical ismatics a generation ago.

The second kind of ism is anonymous or, as we may say, anonistic. Generally this evolves from an eponism. Thus Millerism in due time became Adventism, Wesleyanism Methodism, Saint-Simonism socialism, and Marxism (though only in a few places) dialectical materialism. There is, however, nothing inexorable about the passage of eponimism into anonisms, as the continuing popularity of Darwinism among biologists well attests. Those who are regarded as inadequate practitioners of dialectical or historical materialism are still most likely to be damned as incompetent Marxists. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been exceedingly productive of isms, most of them coinages in response to political, economic, and social events. Think only of industrialism, agrarianism, capitalism, feudalism, romanticism, socialism, mechanism, scientism, humanitarianism, utilitarianism, primitivism, atomism, vitalism, individualism, liberalism, radicalism—all either coinages or else adaptations of long-standing words, all efforts to encapsulate the zeitgeist through exercises in ismatics. What powers are endowed in them! Earlier, concrete human beings had done things—been poor, built workshops, passed laws, et cetera. Now, however, industrialism or individualism gets the credit. Tocqueville, no mean stylist for his time, wrote ruefully of his use of the word *individualisme*, noting that it would

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never have occurred to anyone in the great seventeenth century to have endowed, as Tocqueville himself did, an abstraction with the human powers of causing, doing, and calculating. But in an age of isms, the individual retreats to the shades. Not Marx but Marxism, not Miller but Millerism, not Jones but Jonesism are remembered.

Isms can canonize or anathematize. Marxism and Leninism are sufficient examples of the former. It is difficult to think of anything in the most devil-saturated religions that compares with the evil that right-thinking Communists—those who genuflect at the shrine of Lenin—instill into the word *Trotskyism.* I recall that in the 1930s many who formed the vanguard of the working class found little trouble, after some practice, in pronouncing Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism as one word, and in one breath. Let us not forget deviationism. To be guilty of either left-wing or right-wing deviationism was to know the hell of excommunication. But unless isms leave shards, how will archaeologists of the year 3000 know all this?

A third affliction in our psychology-drenched epoch is psychobabble, and unlike structuralism and ismism, it affects the unlettered as well as the lettered. The core, the essence of psychobabble is *feeling*, that is, one's feeling about anything whatever. There is an old refrain that goes: There are those who know and know that they know; there are those who know and know not that they know; there are those who know not and know not that they know not; and there are those who know not and know they know not.

We have to rewrite that today: There are those who feel and feel that they feel; there are those who feel and feel not that they feel; there are those who feel not and feel not that they feel not; and there are those who feel not and (Oh, cursed spite!) *feel* that they feel not. For the last, there are of course dozens, hundreds, of cures or retreats—many, but by no means all, in California. Perhaps my readers will forgive one more light bulb joke: How many Californians does it take to replace a light bulb? Two. One to unscrew and screw the bulb; one to feel the experience.

It seems not to matter very much what the subject or question is. Answer or response almost certainly will begin "I feel." If it is the Lincoln or Kennedy assassination, Judy Psychobabble will be interested only in acquainting us—in dripping detail—with exactly what she was feeling on the day she learned about each and, naturally, how she felt and continues to feel about these events.

Such obsession with self and with feeling is entirely normal in iron ages. "Epochs which are regressive," declared Goethe, "and in process of dissolution are always subjective, whereas the trend in all progressive epochs is objective." The word *subjective* hardly does justice, though,

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to our epoch of self-spelunking, awareness-intoxication, and ego-diving. Novelists and playwrights have made small fortunes, to be sure, out of public exposure of their psychogenitalia. This compulsion to expose one's psychic parts seems to be particularly fierce in the breed known as Creative Writers. Most of them, knowing nothing else but the closet of academia, have little if anything to write about but themselves—early toilet training, coatroom sex experimentation, and the rest of the Sturm und Drang of the typical academic's biography.

Consider a recent specimen of this genre. A half-dozen narcissists convene as a club in a room at the faculty club that doubtlessly exists on the campus where the author has secure academic tenure. The plot consists of successive unbuttonings of the half-dozen egomaniacs present: that is, a disclosure of their selves and their awarenesses of their selves. Then, unbuttoning all over, a unison of howling occurs—this no doubt to make plain to the reader that such is the true horror of the existential void we live in that mere words fail. It is a mark of our less than golden age that such a book became an instant best-seller, its author eagerly sought out by talk-show hosts who, themselves, are masters of the art of inducing the desire of exposure in others.

By the 1960s the social sciences were awash in subjectivism in its divers forms. The ultimate goal of sociology, intoned one of the mandarins of the discipline, is "the deepening of the sociologist's own awareness of who and what he is in a specific society at any given time. . . ." Such a goal would not have had much, if any, meaning for Durkheim, Weber, and their students, or for the vast majority of social scientists down to the late 1950s; but such reflexiveness was manna for the New Left taking shape at that time. If there is one overriding difference between the New Left of the 1960s and the Old Left, it lies in the value given by the New Left to prerational states of consciousness, manifest in such admiring testaments as Charles Reich's *Greening of America* and Theodore Roszak's *Making of a Counter Culture*. So obscurantist a mind as R. D. Laing could win wide renown among intellectuals for praise of states of consciousness created not only by "our looking at ourselves, but also by our looking at others looking at us and our reconstitution and alteration of these views of others around us." That's not schizophrenia, folks; it's psychobabble.

Psychobabble became the lingua franca of the educated and the uneducated alike, of age and youth, of the sane and the demented. No wonder that special forms of wisdom were found in the minds of schizophrenics when the entire object of the use of consciousness became the attainment of directness of experience through feeling that would be unmediated or unfiltered by the rational mind. From subjectivism and egocentricity it is but a short step to assaults upon the

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disciplines of language and reason. Psychobabble made it relatively easy for so-called Black English to merit the serious regard of educators in this country, its barbaric syntax and impoverished vocabulary actually held up in some quarters as a model of linguistic simplicity. All in all, it is hard to think of any age of Western history in which the necessary walls of reason and language have been as badly eroded as during the past half century, chiefly as the consequence of calculated retreat from the external and objective to the subjective.

Closely related in our day to psychobabble is ecobabble, the argot of those for whom communion with ecosystems in the mountains, in the forests, and on the seashores is the equivalent of the communion enjoyed by psychobabblers through the interlocking of selves and awarenesses of selves. Nothing bespeaks our age of iron more eloquently than the rise of nature worship. If there is a patron saint of the ecobabblers it must be Saint Francis, he of communion with birds, animals, fish, and sun. He came very close, indeed—as he should have—to excommunication and worse for heresy, for many of his doctrines were expressly counter to the biblical injunction to man to have dominion over all that lives on the earth, and counter equally to Protagoras's "Man is the measure of all things." But Saint Francis's mystic pantheism has many worshippers in the Western world at the present time, no matter how addlepated it may seem.

Environmentalism in our day is the perverse metamorphosis of the conservation envisioned at the beginning of the century by such farseeing minds as Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot. Pinchot said to a national association of foresters that when he looked at a forest, what he really saw was housing for future generations. Not so today. When the Friends of the Earth or the Audubon Society look at a forest, they see a bosky shrine for druids, a race that must outdo all others in numbers of lobbies in Washington, D.C.

Conservationists sought only to put efficiency in economic growth, a form of progress they never for a moment doubted, so far as its effects upon human beings were concerned. Current environmentalists, speakers of eco- and naturebabble, detest economic growth and social progress and prate of "the steady-state society" or "elegant frugality." Conservationists were eager to develop all possible forms of energy and would have welcomed nuclear power had they known of it. Not our right-thinking ecobabblers, though. For them a nuclear reactor is a "ticking bomb." Are ecobabblers really that stupid? It is not likely, for they are almost always well schooled. Much more likely is the hypothesis that antinuclear babble is just another way of frightening people away from belief in economic progress.

Free private enterprise and economic growth are the enemies. They

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must be stopped, for, as is only too obvious, growth begets jobs, flourishing businesses, rises in standards of living, and, necessarily, the threat of further ravishments of the body of Mother Earth by those looking forward to owning the same kinds of houses, gardens, streets, and automobiles that environmentalists characteristically already live in or with. This is simply not to be tolerated, and therefore we have the now familiar spectacle of literally millions of well-off, privileged, often very powerful Americans engaged incessantly in the crusade against economic growth.

Given the political and economic significance of environmentalism, it follows that its ranks will be permeated by the devotees of other isms—feminists, antivivisectionists, antifluoridationists, anti-abortionists, Zen followers, and many more. Engels took shrewd note of this when communism was budding and attracting to itself vegetarians, faith healers, and the like, calling his readers' attention to the fact that Christianity had begun in ancient Rome in precisely the same fashion. We may therefore expect that a great many who are not, at bottom, turned on by huge, untouchable forests will nevertheless fraternize and make liaisons of convenience. Some of the hybrids that are produced are lamentably infertile. Thus the heartrending story of the young lady who majored in Eco-Feminism (at the University of California, Santa Cruz, I believe—its redwoods and its druid cults would suggest it) and graduated with honors. Then, taking herself to Washington, D.C., with visions of eco and feminist plums in her head, she discovered that, however devoted the lobbies of environmentalists and feminists may be to the idea of Eco-Feminism, what they really want in their offices are people who can read, write, and count. Hers is a pathetic case, but one may take consolation in knowing there will not be very many others. For the great majority of those who study things like Eco-Feminism do not need jobs.

Alienation and anxiety should not be overlooked in our cataloguing of the attributes of an ungolden age. Both of these states can be, and generally are, learned—in progressive schools and, above all, in the fiction and nonfiction of our age. "Anxiety is the natural state of twentieth-century man," intones our Leading Novelist. "Crime is caused by alienation," it was decided by a committee of clerics and others innocent of any knowledge of crime. "America suffers from a spiritual malaise affecting all its citizens," declared a recent president from the White House for want of anything of substance to say on the revitalization of the economy. "The human spirit has been alienated by technology"—it has been said so many times that one despairs of keeping track.

The result is that youth today is virtually mandated to the state of alienation, though it may not know from what, simply because alienation is taught just as the Gospel once was in schools and colleges, or at least

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in those in which the humanities are luxuriant. The only remedy that I can think of for this epidemic of alienation is a law that makes it a misdemeanor to use the word *alienation* without immediate and explicit identification of exactly who is alienated and from what. This will not take care of all cases, to be sure. There will always be Marxists alienated from work of any kind whatever; psychobabblers in a chronic state of what Hegelians called *Entäusserung*, that is, alienation from their own selves (easy enough to understand by anyone who sees or knows some of these selves from their outsides); and others in the dark underground of reification and egocentricity.

Consciousness and false consciousness are revered attributes of our age, the latter a matter of pronouncement, of course. The intellectual world is filled with little Rousseaus distinguishing between the General Will (good!) and the odious Will of All, little Freuds mandating sickness for all who have not undergone psychoanalysis or paid their bills for their treatment, and little Marxes distinguishing between Class Consciousness and False Consciousness. Professors, undertakers, television producers, members of the Moral Majority, journalists are among the many who make these vital distinctions between true and false consciousness.

Thanks to Freud, according to *Punch* many years ago, we know that when we think a thing, the thing we think is not the thing we think we think but only the thing we think we think we think. Marx could have put the matter comparably had he chosen to. That is, the working class that thinks it likes its work, that seeks promotions, enjoys automobiles, beer, sports, television comedies, and movies and that wants to see its children rise on the social ladder, in fact only thinks it thinks it likes all of these inasmuch as it is the victim of false consciousness.

If this pretentious arrogance were the property only of cult Marxists and Freudians, matters would be different. Unhappily there are tens of thousands of opinion makers—environmentalists, organic food faddists, tobacco abstainers, anti-abortionists, seat-belt fanatics, political columnists, television news readers, preachers and other moralists—only too happy to distinguish between what the American people think they think and what they in fact only think they think they think. It is doubtful that even under the Inquisition in postmedieval Europe the minds of people were as ruthlessly invaded by Church propaganda as are the minds of Americans today by the Ralph Naders of both sexes and all ages who forever crusade against the people's so-called false consciousness.

Preoccupation with past and future is another attribute of ages such as ours today. Toynbee lists archaism and futurism as nearly infallible evidences of regressiveness in the histories of civilizations. Nostalgia, which is the rust of memory, the detritus left by waning tradition and

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ritual, runs rampant over the landscape. It is the basis, indeed, of a large industry that concerns itself with pleasing nostalgia lovers by reviving old movies, songs, paintings, sculpture, and other traits of ages or decades behind us. Nostalgia has nothing to do with respect for the past—so conspicuously absent in our age of fragmented, distorted, issue-oriented, so-called history courses in the schools. In nostalgia the past is re-created as a form of escape; it is not returned to for nourishment. Nostalgia is the very opposite of the states of mind that attend respect for tradition and ritual. In fact, nostalgia is a means, to use T. S. Eliot's words, "of disowning the past." Ritual and tradition are time binding; past, present, and future are telescoped, as it were. But the effect of nostalgia, with its ever-fitful, short-lived, and superficial plunges into this or that period, is to debauch a proper sense of history and diminish the appeal of the present—the sacred present, as Whitehead called it. Nostalgia makes the past a mere cornucopia of anodynes.

Futurism is, however, much more of an epidemic in our time than is archaism or nostalgia. For, in addition to the burgeoning literature of the future, to be seen in novel, story, and film script, there is the monstrosity known as futurology, cherished mistress of economists, other social scientists, and a substantial number of corporate executives, and an object of awe to large segments of the public. The fundamental assumption of this ill-named and ill-conceived "discipline" is that the future is contained in the present, and therefore, if we but examine the present with all the thoroughness that the computer revolution makes possible, we shall find the embryo of the future and then, with that embryo as a guide, extend it into the full growth that is the future ahead of us. There are computer fanatics who do not doubt for a moment that if we intensify and multiply our use of computers, we shall be able to foresee the future with the same accuracy that now goes into our recovery of the past. Nothing so easily yields money and profit in our day as the promise of economists and other witch doctors from the social sciences to reach the future through econometric models of one kind or other and thus be able to forecast. That not one economist of record in the early 1970s was able to forecast correctly what actually happened to the American economy in the final years of that decade of stagflation, high interest rates, and the like seems to have not one iota of effect on the businessman's confidence in the models and numbers that futurology, under whatever name, comes up with.

The blunt and inescapable fact is that the future is not in the present. Nor is our present to be found by searching the past. To use one example: science. The science of 1980 was not in the science of the 1930s. The science of the year 2025, assuming there is a continuing history of science, is not to be found in potential and embryonic shape in

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our present. Futurologists, whether unwittingly or calculatedly, confuse continuity of time with continuity of history. And for all their parading of mathematical models and computerware, their forecasts and predictions come down literally to simple extrapolation, extension of some real or imaginary trend in the present into the future. This is what Marx did. He looked out on the English economy of his day and saw not the extraordinary expansion and elevation of the standard of living that was proceeding so rapidly, but rather a moribund organism, one slowly dying from internal diseases, one whose final death could be accurately predicted. Would Marx's monumental misperception and misconception have been obviated by use of present-day computers? Not one bit. Computers have nothing to feed on but the perceptions and misperceptions of the highly fallible human race—which includes econometric forecasters and futurologists of all sizes and shades. All of this notwithstanding, futurology will surely succeed in the entrepreneurial-profit sense, for in an age of worship of scientific gadgetry it places the clothing of science upon the emaciated body of old-fashioned hunch and conjecture. The computer, it is thought—by literally tens of millions of converts—will prove to be our scientific subtitute for H. G. Wells's time machine.

Next, it is good to be original, or better *an* original, in an ungolden age. The quest for originality is boundless in America at the present time, and if it is more often than not the kind of originality we see in a two-headed calf, it doesn't matter. To wear a Blass or Klein original is the dream of every poseur, and it does not matter a whit that in any given year such an original may be aesthetically revolting or totally without comfort and utility. The feverish competition in the sciences for earliest publication—so candidly revealed for us by James Watson in his book on the search for the double helix—is at bottom a craving for originality, for being first with the first. The *Guinness Book of World Records* holds virtually totemic place in our imaginations. The quest for originality is our leaden substitute for a golden age's quest for perfection. The builders of the Parthenon were not seeking originality but perfection. So was Plato; so were Vergil, Dante, Shakespeare, and Goethe. So were Copernicus, Newton, Maxwell, Mendel, and Einstein. Or, if not perfection, reality, the truth. But not originality.

The best protection civilization has against the quest for originality is similar to that which exists in the biological world—to wit, the sterility of the strictly original. Two-headed calves do not reproduce, nor do other monstrosities. I believe the same holds and has always held in the history of culture. The calculatedly original piece of work is unlikely to produce progeny. We may therefore take comfort that the two-headed calves painted by our modernist-futurist paint-spatterers, de-

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signed by our Bauhaus-spawned architects, and written by our Mailers, Barthelmes, and Pynchons will not yield much in the way of issue.

Fear not to be snobbish. Snobs are abundant and fecund in ungolden ages, especially in the world of letters. Thackeray's *Book of Snobs* (first published as *The Snobs of England*) dealt admirably with the poets, essayists, and novelists of the period around 1840 when lack of talent could be so easily camouflaged by aggressive snobbery. The snob, wrote Thackeray, is one "who meanly admires mean things." He continued: "It is impossible in our condition of society not sometimes to be a snob." Very true; but it has to be acknowledged that some work at it harder than others. It would be nice if Thackeray's book were updated to our time. But by whom?

The Snobs of New York makes an excellent title for a book that would almost certainly hit the best-seller list inasmuch as tens of thousands would buy it in order to learn snobbery or to polish existing snobbery. Separate chapters could deal with the denizens of such boutiques as Gucci's, with headwaiters in French restaurants, but also, not for a moment to be overlooked, with members of writers' and artists' colonies in the Hamptons, with tenured Creative Writers in English departments, with certain notable publishing houses, and with the editors of a half-dozen of New York's most elegant and radical-chic magazines.

There should also be a full chapter in any book of snobs on the word-sniffers and high-colonic irrigationists of colloquialism, who are known respectfully, to themselves at least, as Usage Experts. Most are shining illustrations of the dictum: those who can, do; those who can't, word-sniff. A leading dictionary proudly lists what it calls its "Usage Panel," consisting of several dozen motley types who apparently ballot regularly on this or that word. One shudders to think of what Chaucer, Shakespeare, Dickens, and a few others would have done to such a Sanhedrin had it existed in their times. I would recommend here that this panel be elevated, through a grant by Mobil, into a National Academy of Usage, if it were not for the fact that the majority of the panel would think me serious. Suffice it to say that such an academy would be a bastion of our iron age.

Finally, ask repeatedly "What about the humanities?" The question has become almost as much a part of the national idiom as "What's the weather like?" The first observation to make is that they appear to be moribund. The reason for this judgment is simply the volume of praise, of eulogy, for the humanities. Precisely the same thing happened early in our century to Greek and Latin, to the classics. I can date the death of the classics in American schools and colleges: it was 1924. That is the copyright date of a book I found a few years ago in a used bookstore, one filled with nothing but eulogies to the classics by businessmen, soldiers,

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politicians, bankers, and the like, one and all concerned to let readers know that without a grounding in the classics they could never have achieved what they did in life.

We are getting much the same kind of memorial prose at the present time about the humanities, and one can only therefore speak delicately about their condition. It is not easy to undo what has happened to the humanities since World War II. There was the Great Ooze of the 1950s when so many vertebrate disciplines—history, philosophy, literature, et cetera—were broken into pieces and ground up to become the bland paste of the "humanities" courses and curricula found almost everywhere in that decade. "Narrow specialization" became one word, and a word of opprobrium naturally, in the speech of most humanists, for the ideal was something not unlike what was taking place in those years at Aspen and in Robert Hutchins's elegant monastery in Santa Barbara. In these places no limits were set for the special babble that such words as "technology," "values," "mankind," and "environment" could instantaneously evoke. It was a rare college campus in the 1950s that did not have on its faculty individuals who dreamed of one great Aspen within which all could live and talk and talk and talk.

The breaking of curricular vertebrae necessary to preparation of humanities-stew in the 1950s made the vandalism of the 1960s all but inevitable. Those who led the student burnings and trashings in that decade could always count on safe refuge in the humanities departments. Their real vandalism consisted not so much in the tipping over of card catalogues in libraries and the smearing of deans' offices with one noxious substance or other, but rather in their immense influence upon the curriculum, the humanities curriculum in particular. Of a sudden, courses in psychobabble, naturebabble, and innumerable other forms of babble—feminism, ethnicism, nihilism, egoism, narcissism, structuralism, et cetera—were to be seen throughout academia, side by side with the old classical stalwarts of history, language, literature, philosophy, and the like, or not infrequently in place of the old stalwarts.

Nor should we omit reference to the bizarre politicization of the humanities in the 1960s and 1970s. There was the kind made notable in the various putsches mounted at meetings of the learned societies and directed relentlessly against departments on the campuses that did not buckle under the impact of epithet and rock. This, however, did not last long after 1970. Permanent revolution is hard work, and neither the students nor the faculty Left in the humanities was up to its demands. Much more political impact on the ancient liberal arts, the litterae humaniores, was effected by the establishment of the National Endowment for the Humanities. In the beginning, funding was spare, and the work done was, for the most part, discriminating and principled. But

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under the incessant agitation of people in the humanities and the nonstop keening and wailing over the "plight" of the humanities, funds steadily increased to just under two hundred million dollars in 1980. What happened could have been predicted by anyone familiar with the history of bureaucracy and political greed. Where large sums of money are involved, there is—there has to be—immediate political interest in its disbursement. If populism, equality, humanitarianism, and social democracy are the reigning values in Congress and much of the bureaucracy (as indeed they are in our ungolden age), then such values cannot help but make their way to the minds of those who manage the humanities dole. No doubt we can be grateful that far greater debauching of humane letters did not take place, or has not yet.

What about the humanities in our age? They are like a jungle. Tall trees are still to be seen, as are a few sturdy saplings and healthy shrubs. But there is, alas, much else: fetid swamp and marsh, result of the Great Ooze of the 1950s; lacerating brambles and banks of poison ivy, spawn of the Age of the Vandals in the 1960s; and large expanses of repellent weeds set in the coarsest of soils, the consequences of the 1970s' repeated sowings of the seeds of egalitarianism and populism in the cultural landscape of America.

What to do? Walk away in disgust and despair on the ground that inasmuch as we do not live in a golden age, anything we might do with the jungle by way of clearing and cleaning would only intensify the worst and further harm the good? That is a tempting decision indeed in our treacherous age. But it should nevertheless be repudiated. I like the words of Matthew Arnold, given to me recently by a friend, found in Arnold's review of Curtius's *History of Greece*: "However, in no State, great or small, is it the business of a good citizen to believe that the decline and fall of his country are inevitable, and to resign himself to that belief." It is best to fortify ourselves with the fact that the tall trees and sturdy saplings do manage to live. And best also to leave to Hegel's "cunning of reason" in history the clearing of the jungle. That it will be cleared permits little doubt, though something comparable to the Carolingian age may be necessary if we are to know again the beauty of a golden age.

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John Chapman

Mary Oliver

He wore a tin pot for a hat, in which
he cooked his supper
toward evening
in the Ohio forests. He wore
a sackcloth shirt and walked
barefoot on feet crooked as roots. And everywhere he went
the apple trees sprang up behind him lovely
as young girls.

No Indian or settler or wild beast
ever harmed him, and he for his part honored
everything, all God's creatures! Thought little,
on a rainy night,
of sharing the shelter of a hollow log touching
flesh with any creatures there: snakes,
raccoon possibly, or some great slab of bear.

Mrs. Price, late of Richland County,
at whose parents' house he sometimes lingered,
recalled: he spoke
only once of women and his gray eyes
brittled into ice. "Some
are deceivers," he whispered, and she felt
the pain of it, remembered it
into her old age.

Well, the trees he planted or gave away
prospered, and he became

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the good legend, you do
what you can if you can; whatever

the secret, and the pain,

there's a decision: to die,
or to live, to go on
caring about something. In spring, in Ohio,
in the forests that are left you can still find
sign of him: patches
of cold white fire.

✪ MARY OLIVER's poetry has appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*, the *Yale Review*, and the *Michigan Quarterly Review*. Her latest book of poems is *Twelve Moons*.

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There Is a Way

DONALD LAWDER

To get to the center of things,
go first

to your own, that
knot your mother left. Stop

and go back. Reflect
yourself until you're positive

you can discuss the distinction
without putting it

into words. Now
fold yourself

inside yourself
like a water lily.

Embrace
the warm darkness

that has become
unquestionably your own.

Rest for a while
in your petals. Then,

gently as morning,
feel the light

whitening around you:
open yourself to it

and be any color your choose.

✪ DONALD LAWDER's poems have appeared in *The New Yorker*, the *Nation*, and other journals.

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Journey with Japanese

DONALD KEENE

Nothing in my childhood made me think of Japan. There was no missionary grandfather, no Japanese playmate, not even a print by Hiroshige hanging over my bed. It is true that the set of Compton's *Pictured Encyclopedia*, which I received one Christmas, had three supplementary volumes devoted respectively to France, Holland, and Japan; but I was so fascinated by France, perhaps because of the pictures of ladies and gentlemen dancing on the bridge at Avignon, that no other foreign country interested me. In 1931, when I was nine, I persuaded my father, who regularly went to Europe on business, to take me with him. Two or three weeks spent in Paris confirmed my Francophilia, and when we got back to New York, I begged my father to hire someone to teach me French. But the family financial situation, which grew worse each day, did not permit such extravagance. I had to wait until I was twelve, the year I entered junior high school, before I could begin my study of French.

There was a Japanese girl in my class at junior high school. If I were writing a novel based on the story of my life, I would at this point hint that calf love for this girl inspired my later interest in Japan, but as a matter of fact, I have almost no recollection of her. The one thing I definitely recall is our graduation ceremony. The principal read the girl's name backward—or so we thought, and we were embarrassed by his mistake. Only much later did I discover that it was the Japanese custom to place the surname first and the given name afterward. No doubt the principal, hoping to please the girl's parents, deliberately read her name in Japanese order.

DONALD KEENE, professor of Japanese at Columbia University, is the author of some forty books about Japanese literature and theater, both in English and Japanese.

Not until high school days did Japan attract my attention. The outbreak of the war between Japan and China in 1937 aroused my indignation, and I remember how angry I was when I read that the Sixth Avenue El, recently torn down, was being sent as scrap iron to Japan, no doubt to be turned into munitions. My dislike of Japan was further intensified after I entered Columbia in 1938. I was seated alphabetically in Mark Van Doren's humanities course next to a Chinese named Lee. I had never before been interested in China either, but as the result of sitting next to Lee four mornings a week and becoming friendly with him, I started to read translations of Chinese literature—poetry, the works of Confucius, and Chuang-tzu. Before long I was eating Chinese lunch with Lee every day.

During the summer of 1939 Lee and I went to the beach together. One day, on an impulse, I asked him to teach me some Chinese characters. He drew them in the sand: "One horizontal stroke means one, two horizontal strokes mean two, three horizontal strokes mean three, and a moustache in a box means four." The higher numbers lent themselves less readily to such explanations, but I was intrigued. Learning Chinese characters became something like collecting stamps, an earlier passion. What joy in completing a set! Or what joy in being able to decipher the name of a Chinese restaurant or gift shop! I began under Lee's tutelage to practice writing characters with a brush, copying the models in a textbook acquired in Chinatown. I confess that I sometimes cheated, painting the characters, instead of drawing them with single, firm strokes, but I was eager for praise.

I did not begin the study of Chinese formally until the autumn term of 1940. On the basis of my lessons with Lee I was placed in the second-year course. The others in the class were middle-aged ladies who had lived

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in China, and the textbook was devoted mainly to stories about filial little boys. There was no attempt made to teach conversation—it was assumed that students could learn this only in China—and the pace was slow; but I enjoyed learning Chinese so much that I dropped other subjects, including French literature, in its favor.

One day in the late spring of 1941, while I was studying in the East Asiatic Library, a stranger came up and said that he had noticed me eating Chinese food every day. He asked if I would have dinner with him. I agreed, and during the course of our meal that night he told me about himself. He had lived in Japan and Taiwan (then a Japanese possession) for years but had never learned Japanese properly. He intended to hire a tutor and spend that summer studying Japanese at his house in the mountains of North Carolina. He was afraid, however, that if no one else was studying with him he might neglect his lessons in favor of the scenery. He was looking for two or three other people to spend the summer studying with him.

At the time I was strongly anti-Japanese because I had a close Chinese friend whose country had been invaded by the Japanese. I felt that it might seem a betrayal for me to study the language of his country's enemy, but the chance of spending a couple of months in the mountains away from New York was too tempting to resist. That is how it happened that I began the study of Japanese in the summer of 1941.

The textbooks we used were those meant for Japanese children, there being no more suitable ones. (I did not know it, but one was even then being completed by Professors Serge Elisséeff and Edwin O. Reischauer at Harvard.) On the whole, Japanese seemed more difficult than Chinese because of the strange word order and the insistence on levels of politeness; but in some respects it was closer to a European language in that it had recognizable parts of speech—nouns, verbs, adjectives, and so on—which, in Chinese, I found it hard to tell apart. At any rate, although I had originally been disinclined to study Japanese, I soon fell under its spell. The complexities and eccentricities delighted me, and once again thanks to my stamp collector's mentality, I took pleasure in amassing a hoard of irregular pronunciations and bizarre idioms, prizing them as once I had prized missing perforations or upside-down surcharges.

In the fall of 1941, my senior year at Columbia, my program consisted almost exclusively of East Asian subjects, both Chinese and Japanese. Classmates who heard about my program were by no means impressed; one even wrote a letter demanding to know what justification I had for studying the culture of another civilization when I still did not know my own. These objections, however, faded away after December 7, 1941. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor made me seem prescient.

In February 1942 I entered the Navy Language School, then in Berkeley, California. For eleven months my group of thirty or so young men received intensive instruction in Japanese—two hours of reading, one hour of conversation, and one hour of dictation daily, six days a week. At the time it was often opined that no foreigner could learn Japanese; those who made the attempt risked their sanity. But my group—some of whom had Japanese connections, others who had demonstrated ability at learning European languages—learned to speak, read, and write Japanese in less than a year.

During the war years I used Japanese every single day. I was stationed at first in Pearl Harbor but later took part in campaigns in the Aleutians and Okinawa. Most of my time in Hawaii was spent translating captured documents. At first the ones I was assigned were so boring that it was impossible to imagine that translating them would help to end the war by even a fraction of a second. Later, however, I discovered a box full of malodorous documents—bloodstained diaries and letters taken from the corpses of Japanese soldiers. I decided to read them as an escape from translating tables of organization and lists of automobile parts. The handwriting was difficult and sometimes so badly smudged that I could not even guess what was written; but in the end I became proficient enough at deciphering Japanese handwriting to be able to read with profound interest those accounts of the last days of doomed men. Sometimes there was a note in English asking the American soldier who found the diary to return it to the writer's family when the war ended. (I intended to do this, but the diaries in my possession were at some point confiscated.) The incredible hardships that the Japanese sol-

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diers endured—malnutrition, disease, relentless American attacks—aroused a sympathy within me that made me forget that they were our enemies.

My interrogations of Japanese prisoners in Hawaii also served to strengthen these bonds of sympathy. The Japanese had been ordered not to become prisoners under any circumstances, and they were sure they would not be able to return to Japan even after the war was over. Some felt that their lives had ended; perhaps that is why they spoke to me so openly, as openly as any human beings have ever addressed me. I have kept up my acquaintance with a few former prisoners, but others, after their return to Japan, seemed to want to efface all memories of their wartime experiences.

When the war ended I returned to Columbia, where I studied under Ryusaku Tsunoda, a Japanese of the old school who had learned the classics as a youth and who possessed an extraordinary knowledge of all aspects of Japanese culture. Much of my later work in both literature and history was inspired by Mr. Tsunoda's teaching and grew out of papers I wrote for him.

My first teaching post was at Cambridge University. In 1948, realizing that money from the GI Bill of Rights was running out, I applied for a fellowship to study in England. Preference was given to candidates who intended to study subjects that were better taught in England than in the United States. Deciding that I would become a scholar of all Asia, I applied for a fellowship to study Arabic and Persian. I won the fellowship, but when I arrived in Cambridge and informed the professors of Arabic and Persian of my plan to learn their languages in a year (as I had learned Japanese), they laughed at my presumption. So I studied Chinese instead and also helped with the teaching of Japanese. The teaching led to the offer of a job. I had already accepted a post at an American university, but I felt so reluctant to leave Cambridge that I asked the American university to release me from my promise. They did, and I spent five fruitful years at Cambridge, where I wrote my first three books. But I still wanted badly to go to Japan.

In 1953 I at last obtained the means—a fellowship from the Ford Foundation. I originally planned to spend only one year in Japan; but as the year approached its end, I felt that I had to stay at least one more. Cambridge refused to extend my leave, but I was offered a job at Columbia and accepted, on condition that I be allowed to remain in Japan another year.

What gave me such pleasure in Japan that I gave up a tenured position at Cambridge? First of all, there was the intoxicating feeling of learning something every day. Even on the humblest level, I had to acquire a whole range of vocabulary that had never figured in my readings—words such as sink, washbasin, rag, shoe polish, and so on. The news broadcasts familiarized me with the sounds of words that I had previously known visually, and lectures at Kyoto University exposed me to academic jargon. I went to the theater often and began to study *Kyōgen*, the medieval farces, memorizing the old texts in the characteristic intonation and the prescribed movements that accompany each utterance. I took calligraphy lessons. I visited a hundred Buddhist temples and paid my respects before the graves of many writers of the past. I met many important writers, including some I would one day translate. Some years ago a friend in England to whom I wrote regularly during my two years in Kyoto returned my letters. I have never read letters that expressed greater joy in day-to-day living.

I was lucky above all in my friends. Luck brought me and Michio Nagai, later minister of education, to the same house as "paying guests." Our conversations at the dinner table each night persuaded me that I could not, out of devotion to the classics, ignore contemporary Japan, as my great predecessor, Arthur Waley, had done. Through Nagai and his friends in Tokyo I met many other intellectuals, including writers and publishers. Eventually, I think I can say, I met every Japanese I ever wanted to meet, including the novelist Tanizaki and some others who were famous for their dislike of visitors. Curiosity about the foreigner who could talk about literary matters in Japanese seems to have overcome aloofness. My students today, some of whom speak Japanese better than I did, are less fortunate, if only because foreigners who speak Japanese are no longer such a rarity.

I was lucky also in being able to write Japanese. This led to many requests for articles from magazines that did not wish to

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become involved with translators. I sometimes made mistakes in Japanese, but the editors seldom corrected them; readers were apparently intrigued by the somewhat unidiomatic use of their language. I have over the years published about twenty books in Japanese. Some were translations of works already published in English; others were written entirely or partly in Japanese or else based on interviews given in Japanese.

I am often asked to deliver lectures, and people seem to like hearing them, perhaps because so many Japanese professors, intent on the content of their lectures, pay little attention to delivery. I generally lecture from an outline, improvising when audience reactions inspire me. I no longer experience much difficulty in lecturing in Japanese, though it is sometimes a strain to talk for the full hour and a half that assiduous Japanese audiences expect.

Ten or twelve years ago I became aware that I could not carry out the writing of a history of Japanese literature while I had a full teaching load, so I obtained permission from Columbia to teach only the spring semester. I spent the rest of the year in Japan. This is not because the books I need are available only in Japan, but because I find it is easier to write in Japanese surroundings, even though I am writing the history in English. Undoubtedly, too, I enjoy the attention given to me in Japan, far greater than I would receive elsewhere.

I rarely speak English during the course of a week, and much of my correspondence is also in Japanese. Does this mean that my Japanese is now flawless? It does not. I still make mistakes of which no Japanese twelve-year-old would be guilty. Some Japanese, even now, irritate me by contorting their faces in the determined effort to understand my words or by addressing me in a mixture of Japanese and English, which they suppose will make things easier for me. Other Japanese insist that my speech is indistinguishable from a native's. Naturally, I would prefer to believe the latter, though I know it is not true. But regardless of the degree of my proficiency, there is now something within me that craves expression in Japanese and makes me respond eagerly to opportunities to use the Japanese language. It is hard to define what that something is, and perhaps, as experts have stated, a person can think only in his native language. But whatever the level may be at which my knowledge of Japanese exists within me, I feel sure that it is permanently installed and that it will remain with me as the source of much that has made my life worthwhile.

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Crippled Laughter

Toward Understanding Flannery O'Connor

CLARA CLAIBORNE PARK

Once upon a time a grandmother, her son, his wife, and three children were driving to Florida through a locality where a dangerous criminal had escaped from prison. After their car was disabled on a lonely road they encountered the criminal, known as the Misfit, and two henchmen. When the grandmother allowed him to see that he had been recognized, he ordered the shooting of the entire family except the old lady. A brief conversation ensued between them, in which the Misfit showed himself to be a man of fastidious manners, deep feeling, and highly developed religious consciousness. The grandmother expressed her sympathy for his evident pain; he then shot her in the chest.

Once there was a girl with a philosophy Ph.D., a weak heart, and an artificial leg, who because of frail health lived with her goodhearted but conventional mother on a backcountry road, compensating for her dependence and isolation by making herself as unattractive as possible and asserting her intellectual superiority as unpleasantly as she knew how. She had fantasies of seducing a young Bible salesman, the first man who had ever seemed attracted to her, but his attraction was in fact to her wooden leg, which he made off with, leaving her humiliated and desolate, marooned in a hayloft.

"I am certainly glad you like the stories," wrote Flannery O'Connor to Robie Macauley soon after the publication of *A Good Man Is Hard to Find*, "because now I feel it's not so bad that I like them so much. The truth is I like them better than anybody and I read them over and over and laugh and laugh." Let us begin with that laughter; it is the most obvious way into the thicket of paradoxes that is O'Connor's writing.

Master of a prose whose directness and precision give almost physical pleasure, unusually aware of her relationship to her readers, Flannery O'Connor was consciously committed to communication. "One never writes for a subtle reader," she wrote to a friend. "Or if you do, you shouldn't." "Unless the novelist has gone completely out of his mind," she told a Georgia audience, "his aim is still communication, and communication suggests talking inside a community." Yet she submitted her readers to tests they failed repeatedly, which indeed they were bound to fail. She was committed to a Southern fiction. Yet her stories left Southern readers indifferent, while feeding every Northern stereotype of Southern degeneracy and fanaticism. She was committed to a Catholic fiction. Yet Catholic readers could not recognize sainthood in the backwoods Protestants she put forward as prophets, or the operation of grace in the violence she thought necessary to counter the sentimentality of the religious—nor could Catholic or Protestant understand, in the harsh universe she presented as Christian, the invisibility of hope. She was committed to the standards of the sophisticated Northern literary establishment which made her reputation and to which she sold her stories. Yet its secular liberalism could be depended on to reverse good guys and bad, and to see nihilism and absurdity in fictions expressly framed to deny them; "The Misfits, Shiftlets, Manley

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Pointers," one critic wrote, "are O'Connor's God." She embraced the neo-critical orthodoxy of the self-sufficiency of the work. Yet in letters, lectures, and public readings she was indefatigable in supplying friends and strangers with explanations the stories were to have made unnecessary.

The inability to laugh as loud as the author is only the first indication of the reader's failure. The stories invite us to misevaluate character and event as grossly as any freshman encountering, in the introductory anthology, the obligatory O'Connor story. Her own critical writings, collected as *Mystery and Manners*, are substantially concerned with setting the reader straight, and misunderstanding is a continuing theme of the extraordinary letters collected by Sally Fitzgerald as *The Habit of Being*. Throughout O'Connor's career, expert readers, writers, and friends missed the point or, worse, mistook it. In 1955 she wrote:

> I spent the weekend in Connecticut with Caroline [Mrs. Allen Tate]. . . . The chief guests were dear old Malcolm Cowley and dear old Van Wyke Brooks [*sic*]. Dear old Van Wyke insisted that I read a story. . . . I read "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," and Mr. Brooks later remarked . . . that it was a shame someone with so much talent should look upon life as a horror story. Malcolm was very polite and asked me if I had a wooden leg.

Three years later she complains to another correspondent:

> All my stories are about the action of grace on a character who is not very willing to support it, but most people think of these stories as hard, hopeless, brutal, etc.

And in 1963, a few months before her death:

> I heard from C. Carver [for years her preferred editor]. . . . She thought ["Revelation"] one of my most powerful stories and probably my *blackest*. Found Ruby evil. . . . I've really been battling this problem all my writing days.

When stories so artfully crafted (and assiduously revised) consistently require the ministrations of their author, something has gone wrong. We who have been trained to luxuriate in ambiguity will scarcely reject a fiction of paradox. The Comic and the Terrible can be opposite sides of the same coin, as O'Connor claimed they were, and that "grace comes somehow violent" has been the burden of tragedy since the *Agamemnon*. But we must distinguish between the paradoxes that express real complexities, the mysteries of this world or another, and those unresolved discords that announce the artist's and the reader's linked failure.

It is not that the explanations O'Connor provided to so many audiences and correspondents are unconvincing. On the contrary, they are extraordinarily successful in saving the fictional phenomena. The cannily placed Christian symbols become transparent in their strong light, and black hats so readily distinguishable from white that we wonder how we ever confused them. Once we have read the letters, it is no longer possible to make the Misfit into a Christ symbol or the grandmother into a witch (as Andrew Lytle did) or to recoil from the bloodstained prophets of *Wise Blood* and *The Violent Bear It Away*. Characters are saved, or identified as devilish; and when we return to the stories, we must agree that the clues are there.

Yet the explanations, in the very elegance of their economy, expose a central miscalculation. Fiction, O'Connor cautioned, has no instant answers: it should leave us, "like Job, with a renewed sense of mystery." But this is exactly what the explanations do not do. Instead of renewing mystery they relocate it, transferring it from the characters and events of the story to the realm of theology. Perhaps this is the proper place for it. Yet the stories seem to shrink under these anagogical readings—a word she does not hesitate to borrow from Saint Thomas. What remains after explication is not the rich tangle of human reality but clear exemplars of the central Christian mystery of redemption through the acceptance of violence and pain. Again a paradox: no author warns more explicitly against "the tendency . . . towards the abstract, and therefore toward allegory, thinness." "When you can state the theme of a story, when you can separate it from the story itself, then you can be sure the story is not a very good one. The meaning of a story has to be embodied in it . . . not abstract meaning but experienced meaning." Yet her explanations *require* us to allegorize, and once we learn to bridge the gap between the midcentury modernity of her

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fictional method and her Catholic value system, mystery flies heavenward. As incursions of grace through arson and through murder and through sudden stroke become familiar to the point of predictability, all moral ambiguity evaporates, leaving the stories that puzzled us all too clear.

Certainly O'Connor was not well served by her literary mentors. Her letters are laced with references to the rules of the neo-critical neoclassicism she learned in Paul Engle's class at Iowa. Caroline Tate never let her forget them; and for all her originality, she was not ready to let them go, as if, in her isolation, they were a lifeline to the world outside. They sustained her literary practice as her Catholic orthodoxy sustained her moral life, guiding revision after revision, digested again and again for the young writers to whom she was so generous with encouragement. Careful about that omniscient narrator. Watch out for the point of view. "If you violate the point of view you destroy the sense of reality and louse yourself up generally." "The omniscient narrator is not supposed to use colloquial expressions." "When you present a situation you have to let it speak entirely for itself." "A story is not an essay." "Show these things and you don't have to say them." But sometimes you do. In stories stiff with craft, the readers still went wrong. Principles elicited from Joyce and James were not adequate to carry a burden of conviction more like Dostoevski's. O'Connor was out for bigger epiphanies, and both her readers and her art might have been better served by fictions looser and more baggy, by some of the explicitness, adaptiveness, and stylistic generosity of her letters. She herself perceived it; there was not much she did not perceive. "I did fail myself," she wrote of "The Displaced Person." "Understatement is not enough."

Taught by Brooks and Warren, she placed a heavy burden on symbols. "Read 'The Dead,' " she advised. "See how he makes the snow work in that story." In "The Enduring Chill" a young know-it-all returning home near death from a disease he refuses to have treated is humbled when it is identified as merely undulant fever; the "shock of self-knowledge" that ensues, she explains, "clears the way for the Holy Ghost." The operation of the third person of the Trinity is to be recognized not in any change that takes place in the boy, but in a bird-shaped water stain on his bedroom ceiling. The wooden leg of poor Hulga who has rejected Joy and embraced ugliness of body and spirit symbolizes "a wooden part of her soul": "When the Bible salesman steals it, the reader realizes that he has taken away part of the girl's personality and has revealed her deeper affliction to her for the first time." O'Connor maintains a double standard of symbolism that takes some getting used to. She laughs loud and often at readers who "try to make everything a symbol." The questioner who hankered to know "the significance of the Misfit's hat" was told it was to cover his head. Freudian symbolism is impatiently dismissed; church steeples are emphatically *not* phallic, and Oedipus is visible in the bushes only to Northern sophisticates. "The Freudian techniques can be applied to anything at all with equally ridiculous results," she wrote to William Sessions. "Lord, Billy, recover your simplicity. You ain't in Manhattan." Religious symbols, however, lurk in the most realistic imagery. In "A View of the Woods," "the woods, if anything, are the Christ symbol. They are bathed in a red light, and they in the end escape the old man's vision and march off over the hills." It is not by accident that to Joy-Hulga's nearsighted vision the departing Bible salesman appears to be walking on water.

By the time we have read a few more such explications (and there is one for almost every story), we have learned our lesson: "to be on the lookout for such things as the action of grace in the Grandmother's soul, and not for the dead bodies." But as O'Connor told an audience of writers, "a story is good when you continue to see more and more in it." If we allow such explanations to carry full conviction, we are in danger of seeing less and less.

Nevertheless, we go on reading the stories, as inadequately, most of us, as most readers have read them in the more than quarter century since they first began to appear, horrified still when we should laugh, dissatisfied alike with our readings and with explanations which for all their elegance fail to resolve the dissonances which assault us. "John Hawkes has a theory that my fiction is the voice of the devil," O'Connor wrote Cecil Dawkins the year before she died, conceding that for one

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story at least ("The Lame Shall Enter First") it was "a good insight." It is a stunning concession, and an unsettling one. We can trust neither the tale nor the teller. For most readers, the stories do not and cannot resolve as she would have them, but retain the murky hostility and anger out of which they grew.

Our task as readers would be easier if her explanations had remained inaccessible. Without the preservative of print, authorial intentions known by hearsay, if at all, could conveniently be forgotten. But the explanations are there, in all the clarity of their exposition and the intensity of their conviction. And discordant as they are with the actual experience of the fiction, they draw us beyond it into a lived experience in which we see not less and less but more and more. The value of the occasional writings, and above all of the letters, is not that they unlock the stories—though they do that—but that they introduce us to the extraordinary human being whose darker voice the stories were. For the richest discordancy of all is left to us to resolve—that between the luminous warmth of the letters and the fiction's merciless laughter.

For the letters shine. They are a cornucopia of pleasure, a day-by-day encounter, not only with a surpassing intelligence, but with a resilient and humorous virtue that converted intelligence into a premature and touching wisdom. They call upon us for that rarest of modern emotions, admiration, simple and overflowing, for the human being who wrote them, whose heroism—no weaker word will serve—burns all the stronger because every line communicates that she would no sooner lay claim to heroism than she would to sainthood. The facts of her life are now well known: that her mortal illness struck her when she was scarcely into adulthood; that, separating her from her contemporaries and her intellectual peers, it brought her home to live with her mother on a dairy farm four miles outside a small town in Georgia; that it took fifteen more years to kill her. From these years the nearly six hundred pages of published letters are only a selection; she wrote many more. She wrote to friend and stranger; she made strangers friends. The letters poured through the Milledgeville post office, scarcely a day without one. Out of the airless isolation of a small Southern town, out of weakness, pain, and loss, out of progressive crippling and disfigurement, the voice reaches, amazing by the strength with which she says what is hers to say and the delicacy with which she fashions it to the interests, the needs, the emotional and intellectual and spiritual readiness of each correspondent, reaching out to the life from which she had been excluded in a daily manifestation of the Christian charity she could not practice directly. They can be read in, read through, read again. Trivial and profound, they envelop us in an atmosphere of responsiveness, encouragement, and affection. "If you believe in the divinity of Christ," she writes, "you have to cherish the world at the same time as you struggle to endure it." The world, in the fiction, is scarcely endurable; we who cannot laugh at its dark mayhem enter it armored and withdraw as soon as we can. It is in the letters that she cherished it.

O'Connor's letters are too rooted in the lives of sender and recipient for successful excerpting, but here are samples. To a student who had written because he was too shy to approach her after a reading, she responded with a gentle respect that must have astonished him:

> As a freshman in college you are bombarded with new ideas, or rather pieces of ideas, new frames of reference, an activation of the intellectual life which is only beginning, but which is already running ahead of your lived experience. After a year of this, you think you cannot believe. . . . About the only way we know whether we believe or not is by what we do, and I think from your letter that you will not take the path of least resistance in this matter and simply decide that you have lost your faith and that there is nothing you can do about it.

To an old friend, with a realism humorous, tough, and just self-deprecating enough to be acceptable:

> . . . let me give you the advice of an old and world-weary customer. Myself. This thing of demanding honesty in people is in the upper reaches of extreme Innocence. The only people of whom you can demand honesty are those you pay to get it from. When you ask [someone] to be honest with you, you are asking him to act like God, whom he is not, but whom he makes some attempt to be like in giving you what you want, and it doesn't make him show

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up too well, of course. Never, above all things, ask your *family* to be honest with you. This is putting a strain on the human frame it can't bear. . . . To love people you have to ignore a good deal of what they say while they are being honest, because you are not living in the Garden of Eden any longer. . . . Enough from the Sage.

At that writing the Sage was thirty-three years old.

To another friend, she relaxes into the comfortable comedy of shared values:

. . . the Methodist-Universalist . . . left in the middle of my talk. I don't think it was a protest gesture, I just think he thought he could live a useful life without it. I told them that when Emerson decided in 1832 that he could no longer celebrate the Lord's supper unless the bread and wine were removed that an important step in the vaporization of religion in America had taken place. It was somewhere after that I think he left. . . . Have you read about the lady in Texas who is having a chapel built in the shape of John Glenn's capsule?

But the letters frustrate quotation: one never wants to break off. These we *can* "read over and laugh and laugh," at one-legged peacocks and one-eyed swans, at the unwieldy packaging of the books that were always passing between her and her friends in the mail, at the customs of the natives ("My standard is, When in Rome, do as you done in Milledgeville"), at her illness. About that she joked continually, lest by any chance she should invite what she least wanted, could least afford to accept: that pity which threatened as nothing else could her Stoic fortitude and her Christian patience.

These jokes tell us more about the stories than any explication. "The only way you can help a person on crutches is [when] going down the steps[,] to hold on to her belt in the back. Then if she falls, you got her. For my part I am always glad to have the door held open, but that's all." Such hard-won equilibrium was re-won daily:

An old lady got on the elevator behind me and as soon as I turned around she fixed me with a moist gleaming eye and said in a loud voice, "Bless you, darling!" I felt exactly like the Misfit and I gave her a weakly lethal look, whereupon greatly encouraged, she grabbed my arm and whispered (very loud) in my ear, "Remember what they said to John at the gate, darling!" It was not my floor but I got off and I suppose the old lady was astounded at how quick I could get away on crutches. I have a one-legged friend and I asked her what they said to John at the gate. She said she reckoned they said, "The lame shall enter first." This may be because the lame will be able to knock everybody else aside with their crutches.

If that passage reflects back on "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," it also looks forward to "The Lame Shall Enter First," in which the lame character is a devil of cruelty and resentment, and the one who offers sympathy a fool. At the close of "A Good Man," the Misfit remarks of the murdered grandmother that "she would of been a good woman if it had been somebody there to shoot her every minute of her life." The Misfit took on the job for the grandmother, but it is the author who takes care of the reader. Any time we begin to feel sympathy, she shoots us.

Only to the two correspondents to whom she was closest, Maryat Lee and the anonymous "A.," both fellow Southerners, both working at writing, did she, at rare intervals, risk speaking of what illness and exile meant to her, and then only after she had managed to wring out the necessary acceptance. To A.:

I have never been anywhere but sick. In a sense sickness is a place, more instructive than a long trip to Europe, and it's always a place where there's no company, where nobody can follow. Sickness before death is a very appropriate thing and I think those who don't have it miss one of God's mercies.

Needing people badly and not getting them may turn you in a creative direction. [My father] wanted them and got them. I wanted them and didn't. We are all rather blessed in our deprivations if we let ourselves be, I suppose.

To Maryat Lee, who was considering leaving New York:

So it may be the South. You get no condolences from me. This is a Return I have faced and when I faced it I was roped and tied and resigned the way it is necessary to be resigned to death, and largely because I thought it would be the end of any creation, any writing, any work from me. And as I told you by the fence, it was only the beginning.

Roped and tied and resigned as to death, no condolences asked or given. "In my own

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stories I have found that violence is strangely capable of returning my characters to reality and preparing them to accept their moment of grace. Their heads are so hard that almost nothing else will do the work." Dear old Malcolm was not without perspicuity when he asked if she had a wooden leg. To her, too, violence had been done.

To profit fully from the immense body of writing that Flannery O'Connor produced in her years in the country of the sick we must put the letters first. I do not mean merely to read them first, although there is every reason not to postpone the pleasure, but to *put* them first. To understand the whole that is more than the sum of its parts, let us take the letters as primary and the fiction as a gloss upon them, the black repository of all that the letters do not say, of the rebellion and disappointment and anger which the letters show so thoroughly surmounted that we might almost believe they were never felt.

Such a reading will show why she could give pity no place even in a Christian fiction, why she jeered even at compassion, its more expansive synonym. "It's considered an absolute necessity these days for writers to have compassion. Compassion is a word that sounds good in anybody's mouth and which no book jacket can do without." Within pity lay self-pity, everywhere in ambush.

Her gift, she was sure, was for the grotesque, for freakish characters maimed in body and soul, though "not . . . any more freakish than ordinary fallen man is." Sternly she told her audiences how to read: "When the grotesque is used in a legitimate way, the intellectual and moral judgments implicit in it will have the ascendancy over feeling." She embraced her limitations with excruciating self-knowledge: "The writer cannot choose what he is able to make live, and as far as he is concerned, a living deformed character is acceptable and a dead one is not." She could tell A. what was none of Malcolm Cowley's business: "My disposition is a combination of Nelson's [in "The Artificial Nigger"] and Hulga's." Presented with the emotional detachment that for her was "legitimate," her grotesques require from the reader an answering detachment—not compassion, but acquiescence in her own authorial judgment, even if it calls upon us to join in the immemorial laughter elicited by kicking a cripple. Though our bemused emotions may refuse to respond to her comic exigencies, we realize that the author has a right to laugh; Jews laugh at Jewish jokes and even originate them. "His prophet-freak is an image of himself."

Of us too, perhaps. We are all freaks, we say easily, and (as she wrote in another letter) we are all the poor. But it is an elevated perspective indeed from which some are not poorer than ourselves, and entitled to our compassion; few of us have earned it, and secular liberals need not apologize for their halting practice of what is, after all, a Christian virtue. In any case, as we read letters and stories together—what she typed out in ease and intimacy and what she crafted with cunning—we open ourselves to something tougher and more challenging than that "hazy compassion" she contemptuously dimissed as a threat to judgment: to understanding and admiration of a choice that, while it fatally weakened the art she pursued in the only pride she allowed herself, exalted the meaning of that for which she took no credit, the life she lived. If we are to understand what she meant by grace, we need both stories and letters, both tale and teller, for it is in the letters, not the fiction, that grace is enacted.

Such a deliberate confusing of life and work, certainly, makes the experience of fiction—the most impure of the arts, O'Connor called it, and the most human—more impure and more human still. Characteristically, she tried to fend off such a reading, writing A. that "of course I have thrown you off . . . by informing you that Hulga is like me. . . . You cannot read a story from what you get out of a letter. Nor, I repeat, can you . . . read the author by the story. You may but you shouldn't—See T. S. Eliot." By her harsh standards she was right. For if we read like this, intellectual and moral judgments lose their ascendancy, elbowed out of the way by feeling, and we find ourselves gripped by emotions not often elicited by the printed text, by love for its author, and gratitude not for what she created but for what she was. In a final paradox, it may be just such sloppy, intrusive emotions that transport us back to the cool realms of criticism and allow us to grope our way further into the literary puzzle we began with: how so accomplished an artist consistently failed to

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convey to her fallen readers the meanings she intended.

The reader who makes his way beyond horror and blind pity is most likely to perceive the pervasive theme of O'Connor's fiction, not as the operation of grace but as the humiliation of the proud. The old man of "The Artificial Nigger" sets out to teach his cocky grandson a lesson; he gets a devastating comeuppance. More commonly the pattern of pride is a middle-aged woman; usually she runs a dairy farm, like the woman Flannery O'Connor knew best. Strong and narrow, widowed or dominating a weak husband, Mrs. McIntyre of "The Displaced Person," Mrs. May of "Greenleaf," and Ruby Turpin of "Revelation" are complacently sure of their superiority and competence. Violently these are wrenched from them, by death or the next thing to it. It is a revealing pattern, the more so as we read the letters and see how the stories have darkened foibles treated in the letters as material for comedy and not for horror. But still more revealing is the complementary pattern of pride that occurs first alongside the other, then gradually takes over, the festering pride of that train of grown-up children, living in sullen dependence on mothers now seen through their conventionality as hardworking and loyal patterns of unthanked love. The children are called girls and boys even into their thirties, not merely by their mothers, but by that omniscient narrator, even, in her letters and lectures, by O'Connor herself. The theme becomes obsessive; Joy-Hulga is joined in the second collection not only by Asbury but by Tom in "The Comforts of Home," Mary Grace in "Revelation," Julian in the title story, "Everything that Rises Must Converge." In "The Partridge Festival" there are two of them. Sore, hostile, and condescending, they are literally and figuratively ugly, ugly in the particular sense that every Southern child learns as soon as it can speak. "How come you be so ugly sometimes?" asks the cook in one of the few stories where the child actually is a child, "A Temple of the Holy Ghost." "God could strike you deaf dumb and blind . . . and then you wouldn't be as smart as you is." The child replies, "I would still be smarter than some." The Negro hired hands ask the same question about Asbury: "How come he talks so ugly about his ma?" Hulga has embraced ugliness as Asbury embraces illness, compounding pride and despair, deadliest sins of all, as she stumps around in a grotesque sweatshirt and insists that her mother must take her "LIKE I AM." The letters here tell us more than we have any business knowing; it is with a sense of unpardonable eavesdropping that we read Flannery's account to A. of her own shirt, embossed with a bulldog "with the word GEORGIA over him," which she wore "all the time, it being my policy in life at that time to create an unfavorable impression." We learn from Robert Giroux that she chose to paint her self-portrait at her ugliest, face swollen from cortisone and hair fallen out from fever. The pain we feel as we look at the jacket photo for *The Habit of Being* is less for a young woman's crutches and disfigured face than for the gallant self-discipline behind the prim smile, the neat dark dress, the pearls, the pumps she had learned to wear to please her mother. "A Temple of the Holy Ghost" is a story more positive than most; in it the child, listening to the "Tantum Ergo" in the school chapel, is freed for a time from her "ugly thoughts," and prays "Hep me not to be so mean," "Hep me not to talk like I do." That prayer, too, is not easy to overhear. It is the prayer of a fiction that asserts grace but enacts pride, ugliness, and rebellion in order to castigate them—a penitential fiction. The prophet of *Wise Blood* bound his body with barbed wire and blinded himself with lye.

Is this, as Josephine Hendin claims, "an art as emotionally flat as Robbe-Grillet"? As we have seen, O'Connor asks us not to sympathize but to judge. So sparely conceived a fiction might indeed seem preventive of the sentimentality she found so inimical personally and artistically. But though the buttoned-down techniques of the Joycean short story may enforce more objectivity than we wish to feel, the problem lies beyond technique, in a definition of sentimentality that seems to widen to include feeling itself. "I come from a family," she wrote A., "where the only emotion respectable to show is irritation. In some this tendency produces hives, in others literature, in me both." Feeling was suspect in religion too. When a friend who accompanied her to mass said afterward that "he hadn't felt any warmth in it," she wrote her longtime

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correspondent, Father McCown, "They look for that and we never think about it." When A. left the church, it only confirmed O'Connor's sense of the fragility of a faith which "must always be emotionally involved." Faith, she wrote to another friend, is not "a big electric blanket." But the readers and reviewers who wanted something "more affirmative" were not necessarily looking for an emotional bath in "pious pap," "that large body of pious trash for which we [Catholics] have long been famous." What is in question is not the right she defended to A., the artist's right "to select a negative aspect of the world to portray." But she was not a Céline or a Genet; her subject matter was not theirs. When what is to be communicated is a vision of grace, a little affirmation may be in order. That suffering can hammer understanding into hard heads is not a controversial discovery but a common experience, and one not limited to Christians. But grace is not only violent—even in the Christian exemplar the violence of crucifixion is preceded, as it is followed, by demonstrations of love.

"You can safely ignore the reader's taste, but you can't ignore his nature. . . . Your problem is going to be difficult in direct proportion as your beliefs depart from his." Indeed. She persuaded herself that she wrote violently because "violent literary means" were needed to communicate her vision to a "hostile audience" that "does not believe in evil"; the discordancies and distortions of the grotesque, she claimed, were what would make people see.

> When you can assume that your audience holds the same beliefs you do, . . . you can use normal means of talking to it; when you have to assume it does not, then you have to make your vision apparent by shock—to the hard of hearing you shout, and for the almost blind you draw large and startling figures.

But the means she chose to bridge the gap between her readers and herself only made it wider. It was to A. that she identified the real question: "not is this negative or positive, but is it believable." The repetitive mayhem of her fiction does not invite belief but parody.

O'Connor was on stronger ground when she argued, not from her readers' limitations, but from her own. The negative she knew she could make live: "Anybody who has survived his childhood has enough information about life to last him the rest of his days." She doubted her capacity to vivify the positive; she was only beginning to try. "The meaning of a story has to be embodied in it." When a writer is, as she said, "only really interested in a fiction of miracles," the miracles must be credible; they must be enacted within the fiction. The reader needs more than a water stain in the shape of the Holy Ghost to make us believe in sullen Asbury's redemption. We may, conceivably, be saved through sacraments, but not through literary symbols.

II

> Asbury's train stopped so that he would get off exactly where his mother was standing. . . . Her thin spectacled face below him was bright with a wide smile that disappeared as she caught sight of him bracing himself behind the conductor. The smile vanished so suddenly, the shocked look that replaced it was so complete, that he realized for the first time that he must look as ill as he was.

"The meaning of a story is not abstract meaning but experienced meaning." It was hard experience that had taught O'Connor that violence can "return . . . characters to reality and prepare them to accept their moment of grace," that it can prepare them to forgive the ugliness of others and combat their own. Such experience was hinted to a few but confided to none; it existed in a privacy as complete as that in which poor Hulga cherished the stump of the leg she had seen blown off at ten years old. Roped and tied and resigned in the way it is necessary to be resigned to death, Flannery O'Connor had experienced the change that comes to Asbury, that is in preparation for Hulga—accepted and enacted the inner turning that is the root meaning of the word *conversion*. She could put it into symbols, but as yet she could not acknowledge the pain and loss and open it to compassion; even in her fiction she was not ready to share it. She would take her ugly characters up to the moment of grace, even, on occasion, allow them a vision. But she herself had gone beyond symbols into a world of believable, daily action. The stories never carry us there.

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So little love shows in them that it is easy to conclude that she does not care about her characters. Those who knew her knew better. She loved her grotesques, though she refused them her pity; perhaps she refused it because she loved them. "Maryat's niece asked her why I had made Mary Grace so ugly. 'Because Flannery loves her,' said Maryat. Very perceptive girl." The letters show her thinking about her characters long after they had reached what is for most authors the remoteness of print, inventing new adventures for Enoch of *Wise Blood*, weighing the possibilities of salvation for the Misfit, sketching a Christian future for Asbury or the young prophet of *The Violent Bear It Away*. We learn to know them better there than in the stories themselves, where we never enter their minds in full sympathy, and at crucial points do not enter them at all. "Who do you think you understand?" she challenged A. "If anybody, you delude yourself. I love many people, understand none of them." We may take this as a statement of humility—or, like her other proclamations of limitation, of pride. "LIKE I AM." Whichever it is, it is a dangerous claim for a novelist. If grace operates at all, it operates inwardly. To make her chosen subject believable, she would have had to dare her way into more understanding than she was yet ready to admit, and find the artistic means to carry her readers with her. Without it, it is the violence she made live, and not the kingdom of heaven she believed it could bear away.

"I know nothing harder than making good people believable," she wrote her editor, Denver Lindley. And a year before her death she wrote to a friend she never met, "I know what you mean by light. There are a few people I can identify it in but I can never describe it." Acquiescing in the talent for the grotesque she saw as both a limitation and a strength, she did not often try. Yet we may wonder if her limitation was as absolute as she maintained. The old priest in "The Displaced Person" is a convincing embodiment not only of charity but of another disposition she rarely portrayed, responsiveness to beauty. We all know she raised peacocks, but from the many references in her letters, we could not guess that they were anything more to her than an occasion for laughter at the grotesque contrast between their plumage and their habits. Laughter, we know by now, was one of her chief ways of cherishing the world. But there were others:

> The cock stopped suddenly and curving his neck backwards, he raised his tail and spread it with a shimmering timbrous noise. Tiers of small pregnant suns floated in a green-gold haze over his head. The priest stood transfixed, his jaw slack. . . . "Christ will come like that!" he said in a loud gay voice.

"If I set myself to write about the essence of Christianity, I would have to quit writing fiction, or become another person." Perhaps she was right; she understood herself well. But she was moving forward. "I appreciate your prayers. I've been writing 18 years and I've reached the point where I can't do again what I know I can do well, and the larger things I need to do now, I doubt my capacity for doing." Already four years before her death she had written Andrew Lytle:

> I have got to the point now where I keep thinking more and more about the presentation of love and charity, or better call it grace, as love suggests tenderness, whereas grace can be violent or would have to be to compete with the kind of evil I can make concrete. At the same time, I keep seeing Elias in the cave, waiting to hear the voice of the Lord in the thunder and lightning and wind, and only hearing it finally in the gentle breeze, and I feel I'll have to be able to do that sooner or later, or anyway keep trying.

She was not given enough time.

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Who's Diphilus?

OSCAR MANDEL

Who's Diphilus? His works are lost.
He was a poet, won
some prizes, dented time
in Greece among the better men,

And got thrown out one time because
he wrote a stupid comedy.
Ten scholars now remember him;
that too is immortality.

Immortality, we sometimes forget, comes in different sizes. It is such a grand word that it resists a little when it is called upon to humble itself and recognize that beside a Sophocles immortality, a Diphilus immortality is also to be reckoned with. After all, our encyclopedias and textbooks are crammed with Diphiluses, each "forever alive in human memory," even when only ten living souls happen to remember. Diphilus, therefore, reminds those of us who are low-minded enough to work, in part, because we hunger for that immortality—low-minded enough to hunger and high-minded enough to confess it—that the boon we ask for may be granted without stirring much dust about our names. Like some heedless wish in *The Arabian Nights*, this one might disappoint in coming true. And yet, and yet. A name known to ten snickering scholars or a snide entry in a compilation; I hardly know why, but even this seems better than utter erasure.

What folly! And how noisy ambition is! How mean! And how admirable are the quiet people who merely live, but live in the purest way, loving, caring, and doing their duty without making speeches. The only real saint is he (but usually she) who does not become one. The others have already made too much noise.

You see how I tack about from one view to another. For on the Diphilus side, it must be granted that without his likes, mankind would never move forward at all. Even those who but reach to the knees of genius are summoned. They are Nature's sergeants. Sergeants and generals—Diphilus and Sophocles—all are conscripted so that the wheel may be invented, and all the rest. They constitute the species militant. Of course, it is easy to tack about once more and ask what all that militancy is for. Why not stay home and cull the easy banana from its tree? In a quiet hour Diphilus understands that doubt. But it does not stop him. He carries it in his sack on the march.

Nature, then, has implanted this egomania in certain persons in order to "get things done" and prevent the baboons from inheriting the earth. Another trick of hers, useful for keeping ambition hot, is to prevent our imaginations from representing ourselves as genuinely dead. When I think of myself defunct,

✪ OSCAR MANDEL is the author of numerous books, including, most recently, *Collected Lyrics and Epigrams*. The above essay, headed by one of the poems in that collection, is a chapter from an unpublished volume entitled *The Book of Elaborations* (Whitmarsh & Co.).

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the self that is thinking merges subtly with the reclining cadaver and animates it. The cheating cadaver stealthily raises itself on its elbow to look around and watch the reading public that makes immortalities both large and small. In short, by a Heisenbergian twist, zero cannot be imagined without becoming something. If it is zero, it cannot be imagined. If it is imagined, it cannot be zero. Thus the dream of immortality—neither the first nor the last infirmity of minds both noble and ignoble—continues to beckon to inventors who no longer believe in the immortal soul.

This Diphilus, besides so luckily surviving for ten or twenty scholars as a name supporting a couple of anecdotes, was certainly a personage of some visibility in Athens while he lived. His mediocrity did not obscure him. It was (I shall guess) generally acknowledged; but being generally acknowledged, it made him a general figure. I picture him rising at dawn for his stroll to the bathhouse and the barbershop, and getting his mediocre dignity saluted by everyone who was anyone. The Scythian policeman raised his hand to his cap and the stonecutter looked up to say "Good morning, Mr. Diphilus; regaling us with another comedy this season?" (With a private tee-hee.) Athens was a small city; Attica a small province; Greece a small state. Mediocrities writing plays were pretty rare; only a little less so than geniuses. Nearly everybody read or heard nearly everything scratched on clay or papyrus.

In our century, instead, poor Diphilus is lost in the crowd of his peers. We flood one another. No one recognizes him as he loads his basket in the supermarket. What grievous fits of melancholy have I not suffered in one of our larger urban bookstores, gazing at the hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands of books on shelves and tables. And what are they to the hundreds of thousands, the millions that stand in our research libraries? More books than Noah saw raindrops. How many readers will read a given one of them—mine, yours—in their lifetimes? And how will it be in the distant future? Incomprehensible masses of books, Pelion upon Ossa, hordes of books, each piteously calling for attention, respect, love, in competition with the vast disgorgements of the past and with one another in the present. Neither is it at all helpful that books can even now be reduced to the size of a postage stamp. Avanti! Place the Bible on a pinhead! Crowding more books into small spaces does not cram more books into our heads.

Here I come to the sticking point that unnerves the modern Diphilus. The number of books a person can read in a given time is, roughly speaking, a historical constant. It does not change significantly even when the number of books available for reading does. Constants are pitted against variables to confound both writer and reader.

Having launched "constant" and "variable," I propose to amuse you with a few fanciful numbers whose only object will be to give "a local habitation and a name" to my melancholy. One constant, I repeat, will be the number of books read, or partly read, or (in Athens) heard declaimed in the course of an average year. By books I shall mean long poems, sets of poems, and plays, as well as novels, philosophical treatises, scholarly works, anything we habitually call serious without being purely technical or administrative. My second constant will be the ratio of writers to readers—writers, let us agree, who aspire to making what is generally called a permanent contribution, whether in belles lettres, in philosophy, or in scholarship. This particular constant is undoubtedly less constant in its constancy than the first, but no philosophical harm will come to us in the game we are playing if we keep it fairly steady.

Three variables now enter the graphs. First: an enormous increase in the absolute number of serious readers. Second (as a consequence of our second constant): an enormous increase in the absolute number of writers, hence in the number of serious written works. And third: the steady growth of the stock of books and authors surviving from the past, that is to say, endowed with some or much of the permanence these authors desired.

The next step is to invent illustrative figures, one set referring to Diphilus then and the other to Diphilus now. In the first set we assign ten thousand persons who regularly read or hear works of the aspiring sort I have mentioned before. These persons constitute the cultural elite. If most of them are acquainted with one or more of the works of Diphilus, it is fair to claim, albeit a mite loosely, that "everybody" knows him.

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Each of these reader-hearers absorbs on the average twenty serious works per year. We will make our speculations a little easier by postulating that these twenty serious works are written by as many writers.

Diphilus is lucky in that, in the year 300 B.C., the treasures of the past are still comparatively scarce, so that most of these twenty works are by authors still alive. Let us say arbitrarily that seventeen of them are current works.

How many rivals for attention does Diphilus contend with in a given year? Let us use the figure of one serious writer for each one hundred of our serious readers, so as to picture one hundred serious living writers in our "aware" population of ten thousand.

Next I eliminate such pressures as genius, the finger on the public pulse, good publicity, and happenstance ("Have you heard that Diphilus has been keeping three wives? I'm dying to hear his latest comedy!"). In my simplified world of imaginary numbers, every writer enjoys the same chance of being known as his comrades-in-quill.

Since I have posited a single work to be ascribed to each writer, we can visualize each of our ten thousand as scanning, over a period of a year, the field of one hundred highbrow works in order to read or hear seventeen of them by living writers. Each writer has therefore a 17 percent chance of being chosen. In a period of two years his chances fail to double, because some of the ten thousand who knew him have died, and their young replacements begin from naught. Therefore we limit the increase of his chances to 30 percent. In five years, however, his chances of having been read or heard by nearly all the ten thousand have become excellent, even if we keep allowing new readers to come in and old ones to die out, and (more important) even if we reintroduce some of the pressures I eliminated at first. For, of course, there will be the best-sellers—deserving or lucky—that will skew the figures. Nevertheless, we can rest assured that, aspiring if mediocre, Diphilus will indeed be recognized by "those who matter" (and therefore many others) as he leaves the barbershop smooth-cheeked and smelling sweet.

Our second set of imaginary yet revelatory figures transfers Diphilus to the United States after World War II. There we shall create a serious audience of one million readers. We appeal to our constant ratio of one serious writer to one hundred serious readers and obtain ten thousand persons producing books in the domains of belles lettres, essays, and general scholarship. Though imaginary, this is not a fairy-tale figure. I see in the *American Book Publishing Record* that some thirty-seven thousand new titles appeared in the United States in 1980. It is at least a plausible proposition that ten thousand of these should be serious, and that as many serious writers should be producing them.

Our neo-Diphilus must, however, square off against a legion of dead writers whose works rival his for the public's attention. And that attention, worse luck, is limited by the one constant that proves fatal. The reader today can absorb no more in a year's time than his ancestor did in Athens. Microfiche, retrieval systems, all the electronic gear you care to think of—nothing helps. To each one of our million aware readers we continue to assign twenty serious works per year, each again, for the sake of simplicity, written by a different author; but now, only fifteen of these authors are alive. If we continue to let each author produce one work per year, then each one of our million readers will be scanning a field of seventy-five hundred works by living writers in order to read fifteen of them. As a result, the chance of being chosen, which had been 17 percent in our invented Athens, is now reduced to 0.15 percent for our hapless modern Diphilus. And here it may be observed how unimportant is the accuracy of any of my illustrative figures; for change them as you will, as long as they have any intention of capturing the realities of our time and place, they will reduce our Diphilus to a pitiable cipher. His chances of being recognized by anybody as he emerges from the hairstylist's are nearly nil. Each of our ten thousand Diphiluses has, in fact, his separate, minute fraction of the massive audience. An implacable constant creates for us, in the flesh, the fragmented society we hear so much about.

The only help comes from forcing the curve to skew in someone's favor. One writer has a genius that compels the attention of so many of our million that it can be fairly said of him that "everybody" has read or at least browsed him. Another benefits from outstanding publicity. A third is particularly well attuned to

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some ephemeral taste or need or curiosity. And a fourth owes his success to an extraneous circumstance—like the scandal instanced before. Each time, of course, that the curve does skew in someone's behalf, the chances of being a "well-known author" diminish from the already diminutive 0.15 percent for our honest, interesting, worthwhile, but less than towering Diphilus. On the other hand, were it not for these celebrities—some of them rewarded for nothing else than genuine merit—poetry, philosophy, and scholarship might well die out altogether. Fortunately the heroes exist, and their existence encourages every newcomer in the field to wrestle with that curve and to try to flex it in his own favor.

If the curve resists, Diphilus, worthy of something better than nullity, repines. It is a wonder to him sometimes that he can lift his fingers to the keyboard of his typewriter at all. You will undoubtedly interject, and scornfully too, that a true poet, philosopher, or scholar writes from pure inner compulsion.

> I do but sing because I must,
> And pipe but as the linnets sing.

And you are repelled by this harping of mine—so Greek and so unchristian—on fame, glory, immortality. Nature, you say, favors curious, inventive, creative human beings, but she does not ask them to be motivated by a lust for what Thomas Huxley called "pudding and praise." Let me then offer a softer picture of creative man, and to show its universality, I yield the floor to a sixteenth-century Chinese, Li Chih, who was surely not touched by the Faustian West. "Their hearts," he says, speaking of literary geniuses, "were filled with such terrible anguish, their throats knotted in such pain, that they wanted to—yet dared not—spit everything out. They had so many things to say on the tip of their tongues without having anyone to whom they could say them that at last it grew too much, nothing could any longer dam up that accumulated force." And so they committed their passion to paper.

The admirable point of this passage is its implicit wedding of two overpowering needs: to express oneself, yes, but to express oneself *to someone*. The Chinese were too level-headed, I trust, ever to conceive of the artist as content to express himself *to* himself. But as soon as we cry or print our message to others, we become ambitious—ambitious to convert, to instruct, to delight—in sum, ambitious to be known.

A fine parable of this double condition can be found in Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. The Mariner, like one of Li Chih's artists, has had an overwhelmingly important experience. He is driven to utter it—that is to say, he is inspired. But he utters it only in the presence of a listener—a stranger-listener, it is worth adding, not his own admiring mammy.

The truth, sad or otherwise, is that poets, philosophers, and scholars are finally taken in by their own propaganda, and they forget that they are members of the tribe, even when they are found pouting by the outermost paling. They perform in the same vulgar psychological arena as athletes, politicians, and businessmen. The inspiration that animates them is the same that swells your football player, tycoon, and senator as they engage in their own battles. They too love the thing in itself. Everyone who practices any art whatsoever, from embroidery to conquering the world, has been seized by a powerful compulsion. This compulsion fuses at once with a latent ambition. To be the "leader of the pack," and I stress the animal image, each person has as a matter of course chosen the discipline he loves. Alexander has chosen soldiering, Shakespeare versifying. And the moral is: if Diphilus is melancholy, leave him alone and save your scorn. Plucking the harp before his mirror would make him inhuman, a romantic monster, but a monster.

Another grim thought for writers today, to wit, that the cinema is inexorably "marginalizing" them, is also well founded. But why is this happening? Is it because the picture is replacing the printed word in our deteriorating culture? Not so. The picture is doing no such thing, and our culture is not deteriorating especially: its deteriorations are merely better publicized than they were in the past. Then is it because movies can be seen by our elite million all at once? They can, but books can be read by a million readers simultaneously too. Is it because each person can or does take in vastly more films per year than books? Not so either. True, a person who likes both watching films and reading books is apt to consume more of the

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first than of the second, but not so many more as to make a difference in the character of our civilization.

The true cultural advantage of films over books is, prosaically but paradoxically, that films are very expensive to make. As they require huge investments of capital ($8.5 million for the average feature production in 1980), relatively few get made in a given time. Against the thirty-seven thousand new book titles mentioned before, the record shows about two hundred new motion pictures in America in the same year. This means that one of our crucial constants—the ratio of serious authors to serious readers—is exploded, as if to adapt itself to the exploding population. We had postulated a reasonable single serious writer per hundred serious readers. Let us now assume that out of two hundred (or three hundred) films produced, one hundred fifty are of a sort that our million members of the elite might deign to see. Pretending again that each of these is made by a different creative spirit, we discover that only one serious filmmaker appears for every 6,666 of our million. Let us now suppose that each serious viewer consumes—between the moviehouse and his television screen—not twenty but thirty pictures a year. This leads us to a 20 percent chance for each serious film to be seen in a year's time by each member of our elite. In short, these figures confirm what, philosophically speaking, we knew all along: the cinema has restored us to the happy Athenian condition. A given film stands an excellent chance of making itself known to "everybody." Even a mediocre film. Even a Diphilus film. And this is what verifiably occurs. During a normal meeting of family, friends, lovers, colleagues, or strangers, the conversation soon turns to the movies. The ritual exordium, "Have you seen *Shell shock*?" (or the like) is advanced with a sanguine anticipation of assent. If, however, the answer is negative, two remedies are available. "Be sure to catch it, it's one of the best pictures I've seen in months"—advice which has a high probability of being heeded and is therefore by no means an empty formula; or, "What about *Clandestine Kisses*?"—for it will not be long before the response is a vigorous "I saw it last week!" Whereupon the picture in question will be discussed with the same enthusiastic vigor that got Diphilus thrown out ages ago and some fellow playwright awarded a tripod.

Again, notwithstanding the worldwide human billions (language barriers fall at the first subtitle or dub), motion pictures are relatively so few in number that, in a rough manner of speaking, the entire output can be grasped by the entire public. That is why the cinema is as much the central art of our times as the theater was that of Athens, Elizabethan London, or the Sun King's Paris. Indeed, the very word *theater* has been humiliated in the United States, where it has come to signify the place where motion pictures are shown: a superb example of the son killing the father.

We leave this new theater and return to the bookstore. There stands a friend of Diphilus among the masses of hopeful hopeless tomes. He looks almost as melancholy as our poet and, at moments, as his eyes wander from shelf to shelf, more so. He is the serious reader, depressed by the consideration that in his entire lifetime, though he should live to be a Circassian one hundred twenty, he will be able to devour no more than a small fraction of the books standing and lying around him here; a smaller fraction yet of the books in his language currently in print that the bookstore has not seen fit to carry; a minute fraction of all worthwhile books that have survived since the beginning of bookmaking; and nothing whatsoever of all the serious, worthwhile, important untranslated volumes written in languages he does not read. Depressed, he pours himself another dram of anguish by anticipating the melancholy of some reader like himself a thousand—why not ten thousand—years hence, whose powers of absorption will be the same misery of books per year as his own, unless a lucky mutation intervenes, or some electronic technique for packing, say, the complete Proust into the human brain in an hour, with all its qualities intact.

Thoughts like these were not so much as born in Athens when Diphilus, emerging from the daily trim of his beard, quickly ducked home to his wife and mother-in-law, and got to work on his next entry at the festival, confident of restoring his crumbled reputation.

Lucky, but also unlucky Diphilus! For the anonymity that the new numbers enforce on us standard serious mediocrities does conceal an advantage or two. Fifteen years ago (if you

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will allow a private reminiscence) a certain play of mine went into production. Opening night came to a satisfying conclusion. Admiring crowds, or crowds feigning admiration, shook my hand in the lobby. The actors and I embraced in the dressing rooms. The talk afterward over coffee turned coffee to champagne. A couple of days later, a newspaper compared me not unfavorably with, inevitably, the Bard himself. As my evil star would have it, this was a paper read only by the unlettered masses. The second newspaper, the one "everybody" was in the habit of consulting, reported that my play was no better than police-blotter trivia done up in fancy costume. I was annihilated. The actors sulked to my face. I dared not leave the house or answer the telephone. Surely the whole city must be laughing at me. But it turned out that only four or five of my friends, relations, and acquaintances had so much as glanced at the fatal review. The tens of thousands who constitute the "everybody" in town had read only the film columns. A few, interested in drama, had failed to retain my unknown name and had quickly confused this particular review with a dozen others read that week. Thank God and alas, it was safe for me to go in and out of my barbershop all day long. There was a knife in my back, but no one to notice it.

To a Blind Jogger

JANE MAYHALL

It must feel wonderful, switching her cane
faster because she is running; but with a
method, knees bent in almost anti-rhythm.
The day is cold, her jacket flys open; wind
like space shots throbs against her tam in
that speedy paradigm takeoff. She's a teen-
aged girl with kind of owl-lit eyes (the way
blind people seem to see inside) and the running
must be exhilarating. She stops at every corner,
keeping up the jog; someone grabs her arm to help her
across the street, so also to join the moment's
gallop; the blood in heady windows flowing through
the brain, heart, lungs expand; freedom! freedom!
Would a taxi run over her or a child not understand
when this costly belligerent figure takes Park West
at a skid? Like a pony wearing blinders on careen.
No wholesale jubilant, and let's suspend all previous
judgment when whatever monuments to impossibility go
slugging by, wreathed in mists of exertion, not of awe.

✪ JANE MAYHALL is the author of *Cousin to Human, Ready for the Ha Ha and Other Satires*, and two books of poetry.

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Books

The Last Picture Show

IGOR VINOGRADOFF

PHOTOGRAPHS FOR THE TSAR: THE PIONEERING COLOR PHOTOGRAPHY OF SERGEI MIKHAILOVICH PROKUDIN-GORSKII COMMISSIONED BY TSAR NICHOLAS II. *Edited, with an introduction, by Robert H. Allshouse. Dial. $35.*

Several excellent collections of photographs of pre-Revolutionary Russia have been published lately, ranging from coffee-table books such as Marvin Lyons's *Russia in Original Photographs, 1860–1920*, a conscientiously illustrated social register of high life, and Suzanne Massie's *Land of the Firebird* to the first-rate general surveys including *Before the Revolution: A View of Russia Under the Last Czar* by Kyril Fitzlyon and Tatiana Browning and *Russian Empire: A Portrait in Photographs* by Princess Chloe Obolensky and Max Hayward. These collections have all been drawn from many varied sources (hence their great diversity and wealth) and should not be compared with Professor Allshouse's selection of some two-hundred-fifty plates from the two thousand taken by Prokudin-Gorskii between 1909 and 1914, sixteen hundred of which were acquired by the Library of Congress in 1948.

Prokudin-Gorskii's work is limited in time, geography, and subject, but stands out for its technical excellence and for the brilliance of its color plates, a field in which the author was an international pioneer. At the same time, his achievement represents a single source and must be so considered against the wider-ranging compilations of more recent times. As such, it is more limited and narrow both in subject matter and in point of view. It has one great advantage, however, over all competitors: it represents the visual recordings of an individual photographer, working to meet the requirements of a single patron. Since that patron was the Emperor of All the Russias, Prokudin-Gorskii's photographs throw a valuable light upon the sovereign's tastes and interests inside Russia in the years immediately before the war of 1914. That this is important for the student of His Majesty's psychology needs no justification.

This was a cozy period of industrial boom, defeated revolution, and apparent glittering prosperity not only in the western world but also in Russia. Revolution had, it seemed, been crushed; its high priests were hopelessly despondent (witness many utterances by Lenin). Balkan wars and crises passed by with extraordinary speed. Continuous peaceful progress and prosperity were dogmas for the newspaper-reading public. The four great European empires may have seemed anomalies, but they appeared glittering rather than dangerous. Had not economic journalists from Britain's Norman Angell to Chuprov in Russia proved that modern international commerce made world war impossible or, at most and worst, a bogey that could not last for more than a few days or weeks? Simple, peaceful, tranquil coexistence was the confident assumption for the future; and it was simple, quiet, traditional, loyal Russia that the Emperor asked his photographer to portray. Plenty of specialists were busy photographing court ceremonials and guards regiments, all

IGOR VINOGRADOFF is the editor of the letters of the Emperors Alexander III and Nicholas II to Prince V. P. Meshchersky. His work has appeared in the *Oxford Slavonic Papers* and the *Times Literary Supplement*.

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The 1981 Phi Beta Kappa Book Awards

The Phi Beta Kappa Award in Science

COSMIC DAWN: THE ORIGINS OF MATTER AND LIFE. *Eric Chaisson. Little, Brown and Company. $14.95.*

Citation: "Eric Chaisson begins his prologue to *Cosmic Dawn* with the sentence: 'Exploring the whole universe requires large thoughts.' In his book, which is an excellent overview of an impressive span of topics, Chaisson explores the origins of matter and life, examines the development of culture, and speculates on the future. The first five sections—'Particles,' 'Galaxies,' 'Stars,' 'Planets,' and 'Life'—are exceptionally clearly and intelligently presented. Chaisson has done an outstanding job not only in his domain—astrophysics and astronomy—but also on the evolution of life. The sixth and seventh sections, 'Culture' and 'Future,' which by their nature are more subjective and selective, are also presented with great clarity and with care to differentiate between fact and opinion. His conclusions are reasoned, and the process by which they are reached is well articulated. The balance of topics is excellent; their discussion is knowledgeable; and the writing is lively and compelling."

The Christian Gauss Award

TENNYSON: THE UNQUIET HEART. *Robert B. Martin. Oxford University Press. $25.*

Citation: Robert Bernard Martin's masterful biography *Tennyson: The Unquiet Heart* deserves to stand with the major critical studies of J. H. Buckley and Christopher Ricks. The first full-length critical biography in over thirty years, it contains a great deal of new and important information about Tennyson's life and times. The reader will be impressed by Professor Martin's narrative gifts and by the way in which he weaves criticism of the poetry into the story of Tennyson's career. Tennyson himself feared the biographer's art: 'He thanked God Almighty with his whole heart and soul that he knew nothing, and that the world knew nothing, of Shakespeare but his writings. . . .' Still, Tennyson knew that biographies would be written, and we like to think that the Poet Laureate would have felt grudging admiration for Professor Martin's scrupulous scholarship, for his understanding of the Victorian world, and—most of all—for his success in keeping the great poetry constantly in view."

The Ralph Waldo Emerson Award

WHITE SUPREMACY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY IN AMERICAN AND SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY. *George M. Fredrickson. Oxford University Press. $19.95.*

Citation: "Professor George Fredrickson has given us a book distinctive in conception, impressive in scholarship, disciplined in style, and humane in intention. *White Supremacy* is an extraordinary and thoughtful investigation of two societies confronted by diverse and similar problems. The author handles his data with restraint, grace, and control. The moves back and forth from the white supremacy of South Africa and its unspeakable apartheid to the shame and horror of American slavery are made so smoothly that one suffers no intellectual confusion. Each comparison and analysis of one culture illuminates the other, and the fortunate reader is never misled by rash generalizations, superficial speculation, or sentimental overtones. The book engages the mind, increases our knowledge, and reveals the cruel stupidities that occur when human beings take differences in color to be differences in worth. Because of Professor Fredrickson's work we have a more thorough understanding of our troubled past and possibly a more enlightened prospect of our future."

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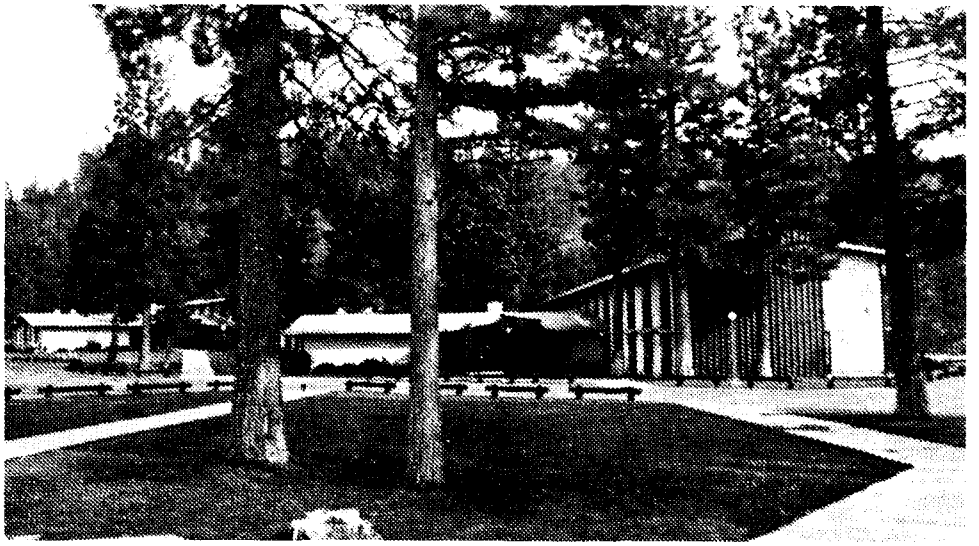

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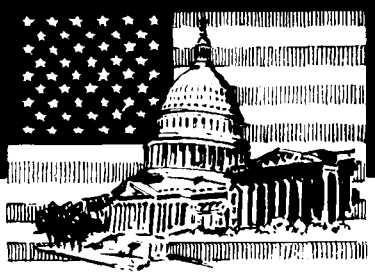

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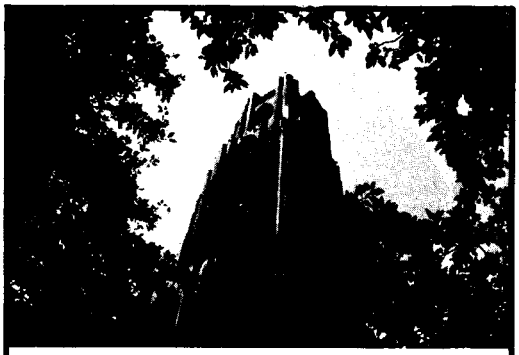

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the grandeurs of the capitals, the hierarchy and the bureaucracy. The Emperor preferred quiet, intimate family snapshots, and in this he followed family taste. The Grand Duke Michael, his brother, left twelve volumes of snapshots, covering his romance with Madame Wulfert (formerly Madame Mamontov, the Russian Mrs. Simpson) between 1909 and 1913.

The Emperor, of course, accepted all the splendid official pictures that exalted his great calling, but he never traveled without a personal photographer whose business was, not primarily to record grandeur, but to record everyday scenes—HM bathing, playing tennis, clambering over rocky beaches with his children, yachting (the photographer even captured the moment when the Imperial yacht *Standart* was sinking in the Finnish skerries, having been run aground by her buffoon of a commander, Admiral Nilov; another courtier caught this admirable admiral at his most drunken). Although these latter snapshots went a little too far for the Emperor's taste—they bordered on naturalism or Gorky's "Lower Depths"—much of His Majesty's spare time was happily spent in filling albums with his snaps of pleasant family holidays.

Prokudin-Gorskii's work, not surprisingly, appealed to the Emperor, fulfilling His Majesty's longing to communicate with "ordinary" people outside official channels, to see them as "they really were"—at work, at play, at rest, surrounded by their myriad inconspicuous country shrines and churches.

Sergei Mikhailovich Prokudin-Gorskii came from a typical, fairly ancient, undistinguished family of Vladimir gentry. His only ancestor to rate a notice in the great Russian biographical dictionary was one Michael Ivanovich (c. 1740–1805) who, after some short service in the foot guards and the Russian embassy to Turkey, ended his days looking after his estate and writing anodyne plays, one of the earliest Russian novels, and a fair number of complimentary odes and speeches, all of course imitated from the French. This was old-fashioned country gentry culture, rooted in serfdom yet remote from it, and Prokudin-Gorskii followed the ancestral bent; he was a product of old Northern Russia and he looked at her through rosy spectacles. Educated at the Imperial Alexander Lyceum, the best and most exclusive privileged school in Russia, he had taken science diplomas or degrees in Paris and Berlin as well as Saint Petersburg. He was a pupil of the most renowned of Russian scientists, D. I. Mendeleev, and like many Russians of his class, overeducated, yet unlike them, quite indifferent to politics. He started serious experiments with color photography in 1904 when he was forty. Without any official position or much private means, he took a most unusual step for someone of his class: he opened a photographer's shop in Saint Petersburg. This does not mean, however, that he was well known, even in the limited world of the photographers, when (in 1906) he took over the editorship of the *Fotograf-Liubitel* (*"Amateur Photographer"*), Russia's most important photographic journal. Tolstoy's eightieth birthday in 1908 gave him his next chance. He was attracted to Yasnaya Polyana along with swarms of other photographers, souvenir hunters, painters, journalists, sensation seekers, and Tolstoyan devotees, to be endured rather than welcomed by the great man's family and a phalanx of believers, long since split into opposing factions full of mutual hatreds. His creditable photographs of Tolstoy at home in 1908 repeat well-known stereotypes and are nowhere near as graphic or original as some of those by his despised professional rivals such as K. K. Bull of Saint Petersburg, with their extraordinary precision and their insight into family and coterie feuds. Some of Prokudin-Gorskii's pictures of Tolstoy had, however, the unique preeminence of being competently colored, although the principal subject did not lend himself particularly to color.

This attracted the attention of the president of the Saint Petersburg Photographic Society, the Grand Duke Michael, the Emperor's younger brother. Prokudin-Gorskii was invited to show his slides at Gatchina to the Grand Duke and to the Dowager Empress, both of whom were much impressed, as were Count P. K. Benckendorff, the Senior Oberhofmeister of the Imperial Court, and Prince M. S. Putiatin, the Controller of the Tsarskoe Palaces, at that time high in favor with the Empress Alexandra Fedorovna. A command to show his work to Nicholas II followed, and Prokudin-Gorskii was a made man for the next

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six years. Realizing the possibilities of photography as an aid to education, he had no trouble in persuading the Emperor to commission series after series of photographs of "ordinary" Russia for his son, the Tsarevich Alexei, and incidentally for himself: the very parts of Russia—the frozen North, the Urals, the Caucasus, and Turkestan—that the Emperor knew least, far from the capitals and the usual resorts like the suburban palaces, the yachting ports, and the Crimea.

S. V. Rukhlov, the newly appointed Minister of Ways and Communications (January 1909) was ordered to provide Prokudin-Gorskii with the necessary passes to all regions of the Empire as well as with all necessary facilities such as traveling darkrooms on the trains and river steamers, Pullman cars, and even a Ford automobile for the rough Ural country. The Emperor's only minister of purely peasant origin (itself a passport to Imperial favor) as well as an experienced Saint Petersburg bureaucrat, Rukhlov was admirably fitted to provide both Emperor and photographer with what they wanted. Apart from his career, Rukhlov's principal interest lay in balancing Russia's railway budget by severe economies—a policy that pleased the Emperor if only because it was directly contrary to the lavish spending programs of the former minister, Count S. Y. Witte, whom he disliked—while at the same time carefully protecting Russia's splendid navigable river system of twelve hundred canalized miles, which was under the ministry's direct control. Rukhlov used Prokudin-Gorskii to take many pictures of his favorite enterprise, the Mariinsky System of canals, locks, and weirs, which had been started under Alexander II to connect Saint Petersburg with the Upper Volga and the Caspian Sea. These factual photographs were, with one or two superb exceptions, rarely artistically interesting; they had merit in that they took Prokudin-Gorskii to the north with its forests and unrivaled wooden ecclesiastical architecture.

Prokudin-Gorskii had good birth, good manners, and good education without any great connections, party leanings, or official ax to grind. He was just the sort of unofficial medium the Emperor liked to choose (there were a number of others, rarely notably successful) outside the regular official channels to put him into contact with "real Russia." The Emperor wanted pictures of everyday unpretentious peasant life without grand personages or grand spectacles; this was the Russia that he yearned to know and love. A survey of Prokudin-Gorskii's subject matter shows how well he understood the Emperor's wishes.

Out of a total of fifty provinces in what used to be called Great Russia, Prokudin-Gorskii limited himself to six northern "governments" and two in the Ural region—Tver, Yaroslavl and Kostroma on the Upper Volga, the border districts of Archangel, Olonetz and Novgorod and the enormous provinces of Perm and Ufa, with a brief excursion west of Moscow to include the country ravaged by Napoleon's invasion. He covered about 14 million of European Russia's total population (at this period) of 120 million people. He also dealt rather superficially in two appendixes with the Caucasus and Turkestan. In the main this area was forest—thinly populated, conservative, peasant-dominated Northern Russia, east of Saint Petersburg and Novgorod and north of Moscow and its influence. It was a remote, gigantic region, relatively untroubled by class divisions, with a small and, outside Tver, insignificant gentry class. It was comparatively unaffected by the revolution of 1905–1906 and the upheaval of the period that shook the industry of Saint Petersburg and Moscow as well as the grain-producing provinces of the middle and lower Volga, the Black Earth, and the Ukraine. Historically, three main strands give unity to much of the material in the book: the spread of Russian culture northward, the emergence of the Romanovs, and the national war of 1812. Architecturally, this meant wooden churches in a land of rivers, lakes, and forests. To the Orthodox Christian this is a land of saints and wonder-working icons of the Virgin.

The book divides into seven rather higgledy-piggledy sections with too many misprints and unidentified place names to delight the critic. The first, entitled "Village Life," features two conspicuous groups—one of a half-dozen jolly roistering peasants singing to the balalaika with the help of vodka, the other of a dozen inscrutable patriarchs squatting by their *starosta*, or village headman, and the parish sacristan, who wears a battered top hat,

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in a little village in the province of Kostroma. Both these groups are full of character and stand out among the tedious, if truthful, photographs of muddy main streets fringed with ramshackle log cabins, sometimes beautified with feeble fretwork. Grain growing is not in evidence in this part of Russia; it is the sturdy women whom we see at household tasks and in the hayfields. There are few horses, a little forestry, and one "modern" operation—mechanical hay baling, carefully carried out by men under the eye of an instructor. The best double-page color photograph in this section shows, for once, a prosperous-looking village with a few fine trees, a manor house in the background, and two white churches in the middle distance—one traditionally built in wood with many cupolas and *kokoshnik* gables (after the Russian woman's feast day headdress), and the other with a needle belfry in the Empire style that dominated Russian architecture from about 1800. This gives distinction to the introductory section and is the keynote to the whole collection. The wonderfully ingenious and varied wooden architecture of the Russian churches of the north stands out above the numbing sameness of the northern countryside, where lakes and forest clearings, canals and sluggish rivers are the only features in an endless flat expanse.

This is also the burden of the third section. Locks and weirs and bridges, canals and lakes and ponds and semi-stagnant rivers give this part a slow-moving rhythm. They are repetitive as subjects and inclined to bore. One or two of the lake photographs have beauty, but the main interest lies in the people: a tall, spare lockkeeper of eighty-four who has served over sixty years; an excellent color picture of the crew of the *Sheksna*—one of the ministry's river steamers, named after a minor tributary of the Volga—with magnificent fair-haired sailors and a fine array of solid, obstinate, uniformed petty officers and officials, several of them remarkable for their physical likeness, and perhaps their kindred character, to their Minister Rukhlov. A fine view of the great curve of the Upper Volga at Rzhev, ten hours' steaming above Tver, exceeds in dignity the other photographs in this section.

Prokudin-Gorskii's meager tribute to Tolstoy precedes this section. It was recorded earlier than the pictures ordered by the Emperor and did its duty in attracting attention to Prokudin-Gorskii, the craftsman.

The part devoted to "Churches and Ikons" is the fourth section, and it dominates the book. This is Holy Russia, with more than thirty venerated local saints and fifteen wonder-working icons of the Virgin. Prokudin-Gorskii has some excellent photographs of the monasteries that pushed Christianity and agriculture northward in the Middle Ages. A massive red-roofed tower from Solovetsk in the White Sea strikes the imagination with its group of cupolas showing above the fortified monastery wall; it was here that the Old Believers stood an eight-year siege against the troops of the official church under Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich and his son, the elder brother of Peter the Great. There are several pictures from the White Lake (Byelozersk), founded by Saint Kyril in the fourteenth-century; most charming is a small white church with six onion cupolas and a needle belfry gleaming in the sunlight in a hayfield well within the monastery's outer wall. Three photographs of Nilova Pustyn, another monastery in the northern forest, show an impressive Empire building with Corinthian columns and, alongside, an array of tall, emaciated monks planting potatoes in the monastery's forest clearing—a striking contradiction of the popular image spread by nineteenth-century propaganda painters like Perov of corpulent monkish gluttons guzzling at banquets.

The Upper Volga provinces of Tver, Yaroslavl, and Kostroma contribute thirty photographs to this section of the book. This is the cradle of the Romanov dynasty, and its history is recalled by several Romanov relics. Most moving is a winding sheet in memory of the Resurrection of Our Lord, which was embroidered by Anastasia Romanov, Ivan the Terrible's beloved first wife whose death sent him out of his mind. Her needlework was renowned throughout the Orthodox world of Eastern Christianity, and her winding sheet was preserved at Staritsa near Tver along with a humble vestment worn by the patriarch Job, who was deposed in 1605 and blinded in captivity during the "Time of Troubles," which ended in 1613 with the election of Michael, the first Romanov tsar. Kostroma, the city that gave Michael refuge before his election, is represented by seven photographs—

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Critical Reading

The Parasite

Michel Serres

translated by Lawrence R. Schehr

Michel Serres, destined to become France's intellectual standard bearer for the 1980s, has produced his most important work to date in *The Parasite.* This book, now translated into English for the first time, spans the domains of literature, philosophy, science, painting, and music, combining them all into a unique view of the world of knowledge in which science and literature are irreversibly linked.

Exploring the theme of the parasite — one who takes but does not give or produce — Serres considers a number of disparate texts, including fables by La Fontaine, Rousseau's *Confessions,* Molière's *Tartuffe,* the Biblical story of Joseph, and Plato's *Symposium.*

Serres emphasizes the constructive power of the parasite: the parasite that forces the simple system to a new level of complexity in order to absorb it; the parasite that, by violating a system of exchange, marks the start of duration and history; the parasite that, by virtue of its very presence, creates the diversity and complexity so vital to human life and thought. **$17.50**

Psychoanalyzing Psychoanalysis

Freud and the Hidden Fault of the Father

Marie Balmary

translated by Ned Lukacher

"Balmary's approach is refreshing. The material she brings in to re-interpret Freud's own experiences and repressions is treated in a most skillful fashion, producing results that are quite striking from a broad interpretive and psychoanalytical standpoint, regardless of any theoretical preference." — *René Girard, Stanford University*

What hidden demons haunted the "father of the unconscious"? More importantly, how did they affect the development of modern psychoanalysis? Marie Balmary looks at how Sigmund Freud's repressed knowledge of his father's "secret" second wife, the mysterious circumstances surrounding her death, and his own conception out of wedlock directed his elaboration of the Oedipus complex.

While arguing for the continued validity of the psychoanalytic method, Balmary feels that Freud's misguided emphasis upon the imaginary desires of the child severely undermined the development of his later theories and the efficacy of psychoanalytic therapy. **$15.95**

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the largest number of any Russian town; here are good pictures of its two cathedrals, both with tall towers and one with eleven cupolas, as well as the Ipatiev monastery, where he was actually sheltered, with its wonder-working icon of the Virgin of Tikhvin. The Upper Volga monasteries and churches make a great impression with their throng of cupolas, domes, steep roofs, *kokoshnik* gables, needle belfries, gilded or painted or not painted at all. Most beautiful perhaps is the picture of the small brown wooden church of the Tikhvin Virgin on the Tvertsa with its single cupola above four rising tiers of roofs; most impressive is a small monochrome photograph of the Metropolitan's Kremlin palace at Rostov the Mighty, once a princely city, then (in 1909) a provincial market town of eighteen thousand people, with its immensely massive round towers and famous for its chime of bells. Bells are omnipresent in the towers of all these shrines; the bells of Rostov were renowned for their resonance throughout Russia.

Napoleon's invasion of and retreat from Moscow in 1812 is celebrated with photographs of Mozhaisk, Borodino, Malo Yaroslevets (with its monastery gate still pitted with French bullets—the place changed hands eight times between October 12 and October 24, 1812), Smolensk, Minsk, and Cherdyn. Here are the icons of the wonder-working Virgin of Smolensk that were shown to the troops before the battle for that city. The little memorial chapel at Cherdyn encloses another smaller log-built chapel and a tablet to the dead. This is a memorable collection illustrating Russian wooden-church architecture and its influence on stone and brick, with its multitude of towers and cupolas and *kokoshnik* gables, domes, and steeply canted roofs. These photographs illustrate the wonderful facility with which Russian architects managed to assimilate and Russify motifs from all the Western styles, from Renaissance to baroque and rococo and Empire.

After the churches everything else seems rather flat. The photographs from the Ural region show the inevitable woman carters, occasionally with horses, and some patient handsome handicraftsmen polishing semiprecious stones or making iron castings.

The Caucasus is treated as in a travel brochure, with pictures of hotels and mineral-water springs and a smiling Chinese merchant with a Russian decoration selling neatly packaged tea; there is a group of mullahs, but the mountains and the vast variety of peoples are left out. Turkestan is portrayed by some evocative glimpses of decaying buildings and romantic side alleys in Samarkand, a huge gathering of mounted tribesmen, and some noble, color pictures of medieval *Madrasahs*. Eloquent testimony of Russia's influence are a docile native policeman dressed in Russian uniform and the self-satisfied figure of the Minister of the Interior to the Khan of Bukhara, splendid in turban and saber, decorated with the Russian Order of Saint Anne. There are the inevitable yurts and camels and one veiled woman and an unforgettable group of little Jewish boys in bright red garments, eagerly learning lessons from a rabbi in—of all places—Bukhara. This was a multinational empire, and these Asiatic postscripts bring the lesson home.

It would have been surprising if the Emperor had requested or the photographer provided pictures of the "Lower Depths"; it is curious that four places with notorious associations are illustrated, though they are made to appear strangely commonplace. These are Gunib, Zlatoust, Verkhoturie, and Ekaterinburg.

Gunib, the *aul* in Daghestan where the Imam Shamyl made his last stand and surrendered his sword to Bariatinsky in 1859 (a famous nineteenth-century picture of the scene is reproduced in many old-fashioned Russian schoolbooks), that last stronghold of fanatical Moslem resistance to the tsar, is represented by an insignificant Orthodox chapel and a small memorial surmounted by the double-headed eagle against a mountain background without tower or minaret or Moslem mosque or tomb in sight.

Zlatoust (Ufa), the old established (1811) government arms factory town in the Ural region, was the place where a crowd of workers, protesting against wage cuts, was dispersed by rifle fire in March 1903. Forty-five of the protesters, including several women and children, died, and the governor, General Bogdanovich, who had called the troops in, was himself shot down in vengeance by a Social Revolutionary railwayman in May. Noted in Soviet demonology as one of the

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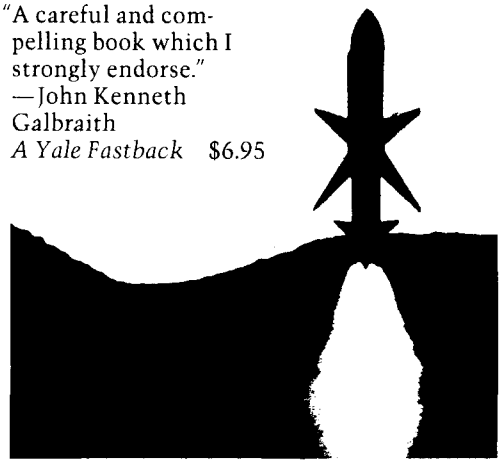

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earliest bloody clashes between government and industrial workers, Zlatoust is represented by photographs of an orderly group of well-planned factory buildings, dominated by a double-headed eagle and an impressive porticoed church with a fine belfry. Its workers rate a color photograph—the only group called by its family name in the whole book—Andrei Kalganov, "former skilled worker," (with a fine beard and wearing a long gold-bordered coat and two good-service medals) accompanied by his son (a formidable black-bearded overseer in a black double-breasted suit) and granddaughter (spick-and-span in coat and skirt and—an exceptional phenomenon among the working classes—a hat).

Verkhoturie (Perm) on the Tura in the eastern Ural foothills had a monastery of Saint Simeon, one of the apostles to the local heathen tribesmen, much visited by pilgrims. Rasputin came here often from his village of Pokrovskoye on the Tobol River not far off; he also visited it with Vyrubova and Julie Dehn from Saint Petersburg. His bitter enemy Iliodor in his lie-ridden biography of the "Holy Devil" claims that Rasputin held "expiatory" orgies there with the connivance or approval of the local monks. Nothing could be further from the image represented by the respectable Abbot Xenophon of Verkhoturie, posed outside an unremarkable frame house, much like an annex to a middle-class sanatorium in Scandinavia.

Ekaterinburg (long since renamed Sverdlovsk) needs no introduction. It was here the Imperial Family was murdered on the night of July 17, 1918. To quote Sir Thomas Preston, who was British vice-consul there, it was the center of the prosperous precious stone and mining industry in the Ural region and a "place of culture and civilisation . . . for all classes, including the workers, that could compare favourably with any town of similar size in Western Europe." It had its opera and theaters, and the spacious mansions of its gold and platinum magnates were admired by Preston.

Prokudin-Gorskii took a black-and-white photograph of one of these, the Kharitonov house. Its huge Empire facade would stand comparison with any of the greatest houses in Saint Petersburg. Another house of the same character, though somewhat smaller, belonged to one Ipatiev, a name already famous for the monastery where the first Romanov was elected tsar at Kostroma. The Ipatiev house in Ekaterinburg became the "House of Special Purpose" in 1918. It was here that the last Romanovs dragged out their final days.

Professor Allshouse's historical notes are better left unread. He appears to believe that Russian involvement in the Caucasus began in the days of Paul I (1800); it dates back to the fifteenth century. He antedates the Russian conquest of Samarkand and Bukhara by one hundred years. The ignorance of elementary Russian history, which appears to be cultivated in some Western countries deserves a study in itself. This, however, does not affect the value of the photographs published here.

The title of this fascinating collection, *Photographs for the Tsar*, indicates with perfect clarity its sense and its importance. These photographs are what the Emperor ordered for himself, and they throw an interesting light on what he chose to have recorded about Russia's substance, quite apart from all official displays. Despite reservations and excuses, it is revealed quite clearly that the Emperor sought to comprehend the essence of Russia.

> Those pitiful villages,
> That starveling countryside,
> The home of suffering and patience,
> Thou, the Russian people's home

Tyutchev's plaintive lines might have been one of several suitable epigraphs for this book. Photograph after photograph records dull wooden villages, endless waterways, scraggy forests, the numbing featureless distances of Northern Russia. That is one way of looking at a dispiriting landscape with little to distract the eye from the women doing most of the hard labor, aided only by a few men and even fewer horses. Fortunately, there are compensations: stubborn courage; an immense reserve of character; for Orthodox Christians, the magical church architecture. Tyutchev's final lines express a saving hope and faith:

> The King of Heaven dejected like a slave beneath the burden of the Cross,
> Has roamed the length and breadth of Thee, my Russia,
> With His blessing.

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Reading Pictures

JACQUES-LOUIS DAVID. *By Anita Brookner. Harper & Row. $35.*

ABSORPTION AND THEATRICALITY: PAINTING & BEHOLDER IN THE AGE OF DIDEROT. *By Michael Fried. University of California Press. $27.50.*

Reviewed by PETER CONRAD

Anita Brookner and Michael Fried propose opposite tactics for the reading of pictures. Miss Brookner's procedures are personal, empathetic, often almost confessional. Devising presumptive biographies for David's characters, scrutinizing his own face in a self-portrait and intuiting from it his emotional confusion, or tracing his presence in a picture such as *View from the Luxembourg* from which he has absented himself, she appraises painting with the novelist's sensibility. She can sympathetically extrapolate a life from the instant congealed in paint, as she does when she elicits from David's *Three Ladies of Ghent*—an unrelenting mother flanked by two martyred daughters—a long narrative that only a novel could record, a "wordless domestic drama of will and submission, of determined age and fading youth." She finds this momentary encapsulation of three interlocked life histories "so potent . . . that one feels uneasy in its presence." The personal admission is characteristic. Miss Brookner writes out of an eager self-identification with the images she confronts, and this intimacy is so intense that it sometimes disconcerts her. It is as if, in looking at pictures, she has discovered herself. Miss Brookner has recently published a novel, *The Debut*, and her *Jacques-Louis David* demonstrates that she possesses the skills of psychological divination that the form requires. Her advance from art history to fiction is a logical extension of a tradition, inaugurated by Victorian genre painting, whereby in reading a painting we invent a novel, from which the painting is only an excerpted instant. Iris Murdoch found the entangled, polymorphous novelistic societies of *The Nice and the Good* or *The Sacred and Profane Love Machine* implicit in pictures by Bronzino or Titian; Anita Brookner, if she had wished, could have enticed as many secret emotional confidences from the *Three Ladies of Ghent*.

To this exercise in empathy, Michael Fried's book is not only an antidote but a rebuke. His own aesthetic insists on painting's austere expulsion of its intrusive reader, and if a "relation between painting and beholder" is conceded, then it must be, in his chilling words, "structured," regimented by rules, "dealt with," and methodically analyzed out of existence. Miss Brookner's desire is to get behind the faces of the people David portrays—Mme Récamier, for instance, who she senses is as much of a victim as the daughters of the Ghent matriarch, a "child-bride, incredibly alone" and "as bewildered by her isolation as we are," or his own frumpy wife who "has no illusions about her appearance and neither has the spectator." But Mr. Fried's book exists to prohibit this collusion between the painted character and the perceptive observer. His thesis is that French criticism in the age of Diderot condemns the viewer's meretriciously theatrical, humidly sentimental invasion of the canvas. As a reproach to the incontinent beholder, he believes, the painters populate their work with "absorptive" figures, self-preoccupied, immune to any stagy concern for the effect they are having. In many of Greuze's pictures, this state of self-absorption is symbolized by reading a book. But the act of reading within the painting is meant to discourage the viewer's reading of himself into it. The picture becomes an asylum of solipsism, a structure—to employ Mr. Fried's ideological buzzword—sealed off from the inquisitive, solicitous territory of human emotion outside its frame or in front of its flat surface. Mr. Fried even interprets the perspective in David's *Belisarius* not as an invitation to the eye but as a barrier, estranging and expelling the beholder, laterally displacing him, edging him away from the suppliant hero.

Despite its often blinkered specialism and its excessively cautious academic manner of argument, Mr. Fried's book is a tract in embryo, a structuralist polemic asserting the ontological autonomy of the work of art. Repelling our attempts to insert ourselves, the

PETER CONRAD is tutor in English at Christ Church, Oxford, and author of *Imagining America*.

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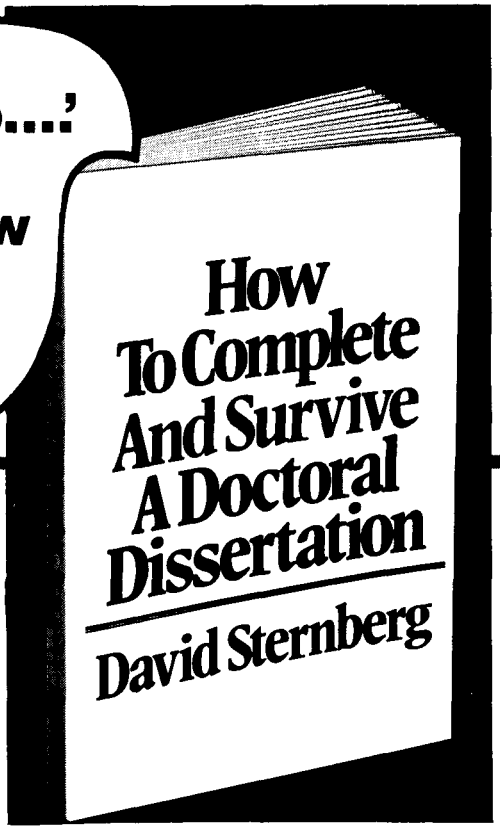

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paintings he describes have self-sufficiently rid themselves of their dependence on the drab and messy material world in which we —Mr. Fried's corruptly emotional "beholders"—traipse about, searching for works of art to reflect, console, and house us. Form recoils from the impurity of content, and painting retires into itself, in flight from the indignity of having to be beheld. One of Mr. Fried's more extravagant claims is that Géricault's castaways in *The Raft of the Medusa* are imperiled, not by the elements, but by this epistemological shame. It is not the ocean from which the panic-stricken people wish to be rescued, but the worse fate of "being beheld by us." We, presuming to look at the picture, are their persecutors, since ours is "the ineluctable fact of a presence that threatens to theatricalize even their sufferings." Wisely, he includes no reproduction of the painting, for his argument could not have withstood the proximity of any visual evidence. Géricault's characters have, of course, "theatricalized" their agony themselves, and we are meant to be anguished and exalted by it, as prescribed by the kinetics of romantic sublimity. Mr. Fried perversely maintains the opposite, representing our relation to the picture, not as a vital glory, but as a vexation that the painter exerts himself to overcome or to repress.

Michael Fried is wishing on Greuze and Géricault an abstraction as hermetic and contentless as that of Rothko. It is, in fact, one of his polemical intentions to connect the censoring of the beholder in eighteenth-century France with the reclusive art of American modernism, in artists like Kenneth Noland, Jules Olitski, and Frank Stella, whose arrogant introversion is commended because "they treated the beholder as if he were not there." Diderot, likewise, has been gifted by Mr. Fried with the unhistorical ambition to turn into Wallace Stevens: the chapter on his criticism of the Salons is entitled "Toward a Supreme Fiction." Mr. Fried is attempting his own version of Robert Rosenblum's argument that the mystic self-enclosure and ideal emptiness of Rothko are a special mutation of the sublime vacancies of romantics such as Caspar David Friedrich. But he advances this thesis too hesitantly and peripherally to make it plausible. Though he may not convince when describing Chardin or Fragonard, his own book is a monument to the method he seeks to impose on the painters he studies. Just as he strives to ban the importunate beholder from the pictures, so he scrupulously excludes himself from his own work, which is dismayingly styleless and faceless. He has only too successfully "de-theatricalized" himself, and he depressingly detheatricalizes art by writing about it as if it were a matter of algebraic equations or computerized formulas, purging it of the humane concern that is at the heart of Anita Brookner's criticism. Painting becomes an industrial collectivity, "the pictorial enterprise," and criticism a geometric teaser, "the Diderotian problematic." Art undergoes a cauterizing abstraction when Mr. Fried writes about it, and becomes as bodiless and as proudly nonreferential as a theorem in mathematics: themes constitute a "master configuration," and the development of French painting unfolds "the vicissitudes of [a] paradigm."

Mr. Fried is at his best when playing truant from his argument and adumbrating something like Anita Brookner's novelistic venture into the covert life of character behind the painted visage. Diderot, for instance, proposes a physical, ambulatory correlative to these mental explorations. In a series of what Mr. Fried calls "fictive promenades," he imagines himself inside a painted landscape. Mr. Fried interprets this imaginary penetration as a capitulation to the picture's self-absorption: the critic is now incarcerating himself in its structure, celebrating its "closed . . . system." Yet this is a misreading of Diderot's motive. The painting is for him—as the long poem was due to the influence of similar pictorial ideas, for Keats—"a place to wander in," a free area of mental conjecture; it is not, as Mr. Fried is obliged to argue, a prison in which you are meditatively becalmed "for hours at a stretch," and from which there ought to be no escape. Diderot sees the critic as engaged in a two-way traffic between life and art. Far from repelling him, art pleads for his intercession.

In an essay of homage to Samuel Richardson, Diderot implies an equivalence between the pastoral reading of—meaning putative entry into—painting and the reading of a novel. Reading *Clarissa*, he feels himself to be the

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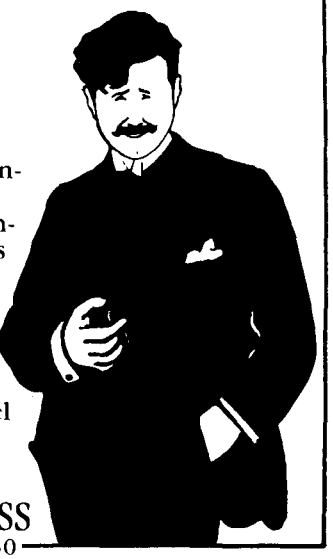

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heroine's confidant, the addressee of her letters, and he measures his commiseration for her plight by saying that he longs to rush into the novel to relieve her from her distresses. The fiction of the eighteenth century entreats the reader's cooperation, just as the painting (despite Mr. Fried's argument) does. In Richardson's case, though the reader may fancy himself, like Diderot, a savior, he is in truth a "*hypocrite lecteur*," the prurient eavesdropper on the monologues of these harried women or the sly opener of their mail; Henry Fielding, in *Tom Jones*, conducts the narrative as a journey in the reader's company, and uses the prefatory chapters to cajole and good-naturedly instruct the reader who is his colleague; Laurence Sterne, in *Tristram Shandy*, relies on the reader to perform the chores, with which the befuddled Tristram cannot cope, of sorting out the chronology of events and imparting meaning to the randomness of experience. There is an analogy and a fellow feeling, not, as Mr. Fried would have it, a necessary enmity between ourselves and those within the frame or between the covers. These characters are admittedly self-absorbed but so (as silently communing readers) are we. Mr. Fried's self-denying "obliviation" of the critical beholder is unwarranted and inappropriate. It conforms, however, to the dialectical etiquette of structuralism, according to which books read one another in an intertextual ecstasy of mutual admiration and pictures admire themselves in a narcissistic heaven of self-reference.

There is no fustian pretense of methodological innovation in Anita Brookner's book, but her interpretation of David is profoundly original simply because it is so devotedly personal. She has managed a sensitively personal account of a painter of apparently forbidding impersonality, and has discovered a feminine creative component in an artist who has hitherto seemed invulnerably masculine. At times she is too personal, too sensorially subjective. She relies not so much on tactile as on gustatory values, and I am not persuaded that the taste buds can be relied on as critical arbiters. Boucher is said to be "succulent"; Chardin's textures have "the dry creaminess of certain cheeses"; David's *Intervention of the Sabine Women* is "the colour of champagne." Sometimes her appraisal of millinery is as headily enthusiastic as a commentator at a fashion show: David's Mme Lavoisier "wears a dress of breathtaking white cambric, girdled with a blue sash over which the extravagant curls of her powdered hair meander at will." These are the liabilities of an approach to David that is tactfully and undogmatically feminist. Anita Brookner notes the division between male resoluteness and female plangency in *Brutus Receiving the Bodies of his Sons* and the *Death of Socrates*, and pursues the antithesis to argue that the masculine David is the politician whom she distrusts and downgrades. She treats David's revolutionary activities as hysterical and muddleheaded, and invokes his portraits of women as a control on political readings of his work and as symptoms of "a strong feminine streak in his temperament." Even a male icon of political rectitude like the dead Marat is altered by Anita Brookner's feminine and sensuous description of it, which dwells on "a thick creamy dribble of pinkish paint down the side of the packing case . . . as dense and as sumptuous as anything Chardin ever painted."

Miss Brookner is visually affronted by the petrified severity of David's great political machines, and though she pays deferential tribute to them, she prefers his work in genres that are less bellicose. His *Oath of the Horattii* is the violent triumph of male will; but from it Anita Brookner turns to a landscape painted during his detention as proof of his remorse for political errors (the details of the scene are "vectors of heavy-heartedness") and to the portraits, which attest—because they are studies of private life, unmolested by political controversy—to "the innocence that David claimed as his throughout his career as a revolutionary." While disavowing political ambition, the portraits also quietly canonize the female temperament and impugn the male: "David's great gift to the portraiture of women is to show them . . . as sturdy, confident creatures, no less competent but far less vain than men." It is her sense of David's unstable, sometimes hypermanic nature—his shock and shame when disgraced politically, his resigned elderly "indifference . . . to his own history," and the vulnerability beneath the neo-Roman stoicism—that governs her understanding of the paintings.

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In contrast with the self-mortifying impersonality contrived by Mr. Fried's paintings and exemplified by his own book, Anita Brookner's work movingly suggests that the source of criticism is biography, and its issue—however delicately veiled or distanced—is autobiography.

Crows and Daws

NIGHT CREATURE: A JOURNAL OF JAZZ, 1975–1980. *Whitney Balliett. Oxford University Press. $15.95.*

Reviewed by PHILIP LARKIN

Whitney Balliett's unassailable reputation as a jazz writer has a curious relation to the subculture of the jazz photograph, a genre brought into being by the insatiable appetite of jazz lovers for seeing its practitioners in the act of creation, as if their faces, momentarily frozen in distortion or distension, were part of, or even a key to, the music itself. He is not, in the accepted sense, a biographer or historian: he has not written the definitive life of a performer or charted the musical development of a period or place. He is not a musicologist, linking by transcription free form and field-holler. What he does, primarily, is go to concerts in the music's acknowledged capital (now, as for the last fifty years, New York) and describe what he hears (in, appropriately enough, *The New Yorker*). He writes in the first-nighter tradition of Kenneth Tynan and A. J. Liebling, in which what is said arises from a particular occasion and is designed in part to eternalize it:

> Errol Garner last appeared in New York at the Maisonette Room of the St. Regis in May of 1974. His playing was effulgent, and he looked as he always had—a short, gleaming, funny, cooking man, his black hair a mirror, his great parrot nose pointed into the winds of his invention. He rocked and grunted and hummed at the keyboard, and his astonishing hands—he could span thirteen notes—went like jackhammers.

Such a passage is no isolated contrivance. Balliett's writing is instinctively pictorial: simile and metaphor, adjective and adverb all cohere and jump to tell us *what it was like to be there.* The playing of Johnny Hodges ("a mysterious, shrewd, monosyllabic man, short and oval") "gave the impression that he was lobbing the melody back and forth from hand to hand." Wild Bill Davison "puts his cornet just to the left of the center of his lips, aims it at third base, and beetles his brows." "It's a compliment to jazz," as the first sentence of his first book ran, back in 1959, "that nine-tenths of the voluminous writing about it is so bad"; nevertheless, it is not a compliment Balliett himself is inclined to pay:

> Ellington in the flesh—his umbrous, polished voice; his gracious laugh; his accent, which was universal and aristocratic; his long, handsome, beautifully lived-in face; his careful, philosopher's gait; his locked concentration when he worked. . . .

And his attention fastens as readily on the music itself, sometimes with hit-or-miss impressionism:

> Gillespie liked to clown and blare and do the fandango up and down his registers. He liked to blow the grass flat and divide the waters.

At other times Balliett writes in dissecting slow motion:

> He would start a solo with half a dozen low, breathy staccato notes jammed together, repeat them and pause, rise almost an octave to a flickering, half-sounded note, and, before this ascension had registered on the ear, drop back to more staccato breathiness and into a dodging, undulating stretch of notes that had a Giacometti sound.

Whether this kind of paragraph (and there is a good deal more of it) really tells a listener who has never heard him what Pee Wee Russell sounds like is a matter for conjecture, but Balliett uses the technique constantly. By now he has worked through most of the main drummers (seemingly his first love) and has begun on the pianists.

But every so often he unites these talents in a larger tapestry. He will visit a player, tape what he says, and carefully interweave large stretches of this vernacular with his own studied narrative, achieving what in the trade is

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PHILIP LARKIN, the well-known British poet, is Librarian of the University of Hull. He is the author of *All What Jazz.*

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called a profile but is really a Van Dyck portrait. Two such pieces in an earlier collection—on Russell and Henry "Red" Allen—are triumphs of this method, making up a lovingly detailed diptych. Balliett admired both players (he brought them together to make records more than once), seeing them both as imprisoned in limiting and ultimately alien traditions, and his vignettes of their different ways of living are done with a novelist's precision. One cannot recall the scruffy, transient Russell apartment and the meal at a neighboring eating house without remembering the contrast of Allen, the family man, checking his granddaughters' homework before sitting down to a dish of fried chicken and cabbage with his guest. After reading such pieces, one has somehow met these men, heard them play, and read their full-scale biographies—and ever after these impressions will dominate one's idea of them. The achievement is the more remarkable by reason of the gentle courtesy with which it is done.

The fascination of a Balliett collection lies in watching his hypersensitive technique (a combination of Leica and lapel mike) receive and transmit so many various musical experiences. For various they are: a performance of Joplin's rare *Tremonisha*, Ray Charles and Cleo Laine doing *Porgy and Bess*, Scott Hamilton, Benny Goodman, Anthony Braxton, Adolphus Cheatham—each one handled with the same vivid perception as if to demonstrate that somewhere among them lies a common denominator. In his first book, Balliett called the fifties "the most bewildering years in the music's brief history," but they can hardly have been as bewildering as the period recorded here. Reading *Night Creature* is like picking one's way through what seems alternately a battlefield, an archaeological site, and a deserted museum. What was in the fifties still barely recognizable as one music is now a shredded and fractured continuum in which ninety-nine-year-old Eubie Blake ("whose fingers stroke up and down the keyboard like trireme oars") finds himself on the same bill as Ornette Coleman and Cecil Taylor. What was happy entertainment is now harsh didacticism, when it is not part of a glum college syllabus.

What do Ben Franklin, John D. Rockefeller, and Wallace Stevens have in common?

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Such a situation would seem beyond the compass of a single human sensibility, yet somehow Balliett manages to contain it. Consider his extended account (May 19–22, 1977) of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (one of whose mottoes is "We are opposed to the word jazz. Jazz means nigger music"). This series of grant-supported concerts ("the total attendance was probably about four hundred") was clearly an excruciating experience of pure duration:

> The AACM has a galactic sense of time. Its concerts begin forty to fifty minutes late, and intermissions last half an hour. The musicians wander on and off the stage in slow motion. Their solos are often Coltranean in length, and their numbers—in order not to mistakenly lock out a soloist before he is done—sometimes last a couple of hours.

Yet Balliett—who on another page says of early jazz, "This lovely polyphonic music thrived at least twenty-five years"—stays on his feet till the final bell, contriving to suggest that he has even enjoyed some of it. He sees the Association as having "a determination to bring into being a new and durable music—a hard-nosed utopian music, without racial stigmata, without clichés, and without commercialism," and treats its practitioners with the same elegant exactitude as he does Bix Beiderbecke and Lester Young:

> No sooner has he completed one virtuoso bit of business than he is off on the next. These included four consecutive—almost overlapping—ascending arpeggios played in sixty-fourth notes and in different keys; a muted passage in which he seems to play two melodic lines at once; an open-horn passage in which, after having sprayed water into his mouthpiece, he sounded like an echo chamber [et cetera].

No doubt this was all very striking. But, as Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis said in 1970, "Who is going to pay a second time to hear a guy wearing a sheet go rootle-tootle up and down the scale?"

Balliett, in short, recalls Arnold Bennett's impatient comment, "Hang Eddie Marsh! He's a miserable fellow—he enjoys everything." And indeed there comes a point when Balliett's role as pure sensibility, proposing nothing and imposing nothing, starts to drag a little. None of the complimentary remarks about Balliett and his other books reproduced on the jacket of this one uses the word "critic," and this may well be significant. For a critic, after all, is a man who likes some things and dislikes others, and finds reasons for doing so and for trying to persuade other people to do so. This is altogether alien to Balliett's purpose. He wishes, or so it seems, to transmit, to reproduce, and so to preserve, knowing that anyone who writes down what he sees and hears for twenty-five years will in spite of himself become a historian of different, and perhaps rarer, quality than the term usually implies. This is what he has done, and is presumably what he wanted to do.

Not, of course, that he is in any way incapable of criticism. There is a capsule history of jazz on page 200, over almost before it has started, that ends, "But what a lonely and illusory music!" It is a sudden and plangent passage, awakening in the reader a desire for a quite different Balliett book; but the next moment we are at Hopper's listening to Jim Hall and Bob Brookmeyer. Nor are his evocations free from hostility. An extended account of a Keith Jarrett concert left at least one reader convinced, without having heard him, that he is no good. Since Balliett is a master of language, this must be the impression he meant to convey, but he nowhere comes within a mile of saying it. He looses off both barrels on successive nights at Sarah Vaughan ("no more intelligible than moos") and Betty Carter ("she is hard going"), but the condemnation is so carefully argued, and with so many qualifications, that it almost sounds like a compliment.

Any writer in Balliett's position is committed to the continuous present; it is hard for him to step back and say what it all adds up to. Even when, in his more extended pieces, he takes a holiday from it, however, he leans heavily on the technique of the recorded interview (there are two illuminating encounters in *Night Creature* with Jimmy McPartland and Nellie Lutcher—who would have thought she played with Bunk Johnson?), and despite the unfaultable historical knowledge that underpins everything he writes, there is still a lack of final assessment not forced upon him by the occasional nature of his engagement. Compared with a theater critic such as James Agate, who wrote a weekly column in

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the Sunday *Times* for about thirty years, Balliett has no critical position. Agate's was clear: "Ne'er look, ne'er look; the eagles are gone: crows and daws, crows and daws!" No one, in short, was likely to equal Irving, Bernhardt, and the rest of the titans of his youth. It was a sweeping principle, but it meant that Agate's praise was worth having. With Balliett one is not so sure. Can the answer be that as long as any jazz player is being filtered through the transcendence of Balliett's prose and perception, he is as good as any of his predecessors? It is a paradoxical situation. Perhaps Balliett should have a talk with Lockjaw Davis.

Out of the Depths

THE TIME OF STALIN: PORTRAIT OF A TYRANNY. *By Anton Antonov-Ovseyenko, translated by George Saunders. Harper & Row. $19.95.*

Reviewed by SIDNEY HOOK

Ernest Renan, the great French historian and philologist, is reputed to have said, "Happy is a people who have inherited a revolution, woe to those who make it." This is certainly not true for all revolutions. The February (1917) Revolution against the Czarist regime was almost bloodless. The Bolshevik October Revolution against the Kerenski regime has left a legacy of suffering and oppression much worse than the bloodshed and terror that spawned its birth. The author of this book was born after the October Revolution. His father, the famous revolutionary, Vladimir Antonov-Ovseyenko, headed the Bolshevik forces that stormed the Winter Palace in 1917, and was chief political commissar of the Red Army from 1922 to 1924, a position next in importance to that of Leon Trotsky. The father died in Stalin's blood purges of 1938, accused of having been a secret agent of Western imperialists from the very outset of

SIDNEY HOOK, emeritus professor of philosophy at New York University, is senior research fellow at the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace at Stanford. Among his recent books are *Philosophy and Public Policy* and *Pragmatism and the Tragic Sense of Life.*

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his career. The mother committed suicide in one of Stalin's prisons. The son, for no other reason than his relationship, spent twelve years in the Gulag Archipelago from which he emerged blind and in shattered health a few years after Stalin's death.

According to Anton Antonov-Ovseyenko, although his father was posthumously exonerated under Khrushchev's leadership, his name and memory are still being defamed by the cowed servitors of the existing regime whose principals have halted the slight progress made in the process of destalinization. The son has devoted himself to telling the truth, as he knows it and feels it, about the time of Stalin. The original Russian edition from which this English translation was made was published not in the USSR but in New York. Stephen Cohen, the biographer of Bukharin, tells us in his introduction that Anton Antonov-Ovseyenko "is the only child of a martyred Soviet founding father to emerge as both a witness and historian of Stalinism." He has been able to learn a great many things by virtue of his parentage and his own fate as a victim and from descriptions in unpublished memoirs and letters of observers and survivors of this period for which there is no public documentary record.

This is a book whose study should be mandatory for all students interested in the history of the Soviet Union under Stalin's rule. It contains material hitherto not revealed outside the Soviet Union, and its authenticity will have to be assessed by scholars in the years to come. For example, Antonov-Ovseyenko makes reference to the existence of a letter—on the strength of the testimony of an unnamed witness—from Tito to Stalin that reads: "Stalin, you've sent seven men after me—with pistols, grenades and poison. If I send one, I won't have to send another. Josip Tito." Many other reports sound plausible, but the plausible is not necessarily true.

For the general reader, however, this is a book only for those with strong nerves. I have been a close reader of the voluminous literature published by the victims of Soviet terror ever since Tchernavin's *I Speak for the Silent*. But I have never read anything as searing as Antonov-Ovseyenko's account. It is like being present in a chamber where a person is being tortured. Its impact is more devastating than Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's three volumes on the Gulag Archipelago. The author's pain and frustration, his sense of outrage at the brutalities and indignities visited upon the innocent, including children, his indignation with the fellow travelers abroad and other "useful idiots" (Lenin's phrase) who denied or apologized for Soviet terror rise from almost every page. His graphic description of the mood of terror and its effects on the populace read like pages out of Orwell's *1984*. It is not surprising that his passionate hatred of Stalin, whom he regards as the chief architect of the Soviet structure of terror, should make him somewhat credulous to reports concerning Stalin's early career as "an intriguer and provocateur." He goes so far as to suggest that since Stalin was capable of having acted as an agent of the Czarist secret police, there may be something in the hitherto unsubstantiated charges of Isaac Don Levine and Alexander Orlov.

However, Antonov-Ovseyenko does establish some things. Stalin, Trotsky to the contrary notwithstanding, was no mediocrity. He was a man of powerful character, actually "a genius of evil," as Ronald Hingley characterizes him in his recent biography. The astonishing thing is that Stalin was able to conceal this from those who were politically so close to him, Lenin and his lieutenants, and also from the statesmen of the Western world who readily judged Hitler by his deeds but refused to make appropriate inferences from Stalin's political behavior. Neither Churchill nor Roosevelt had a glimmer of the man they were dealing with, one who, in turn, suspected them of deep duplicity since their naiveté was incredible to him. Nothing speaks more eloquently of the pathetic unawareness of the statesmen of the Western world than Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King's reaction to Gouzenko's defection from the Soviet embassy in Ottawa with documents revealing the vast Soviet espionage operation against its wartime allies. Reporting to the House of Commons, King said:

> I told the man Gouzenko he should go back and put it into the Soviet files, that we did not want it. And the reason I did it . . . I did not want to complicate relations with Russia. From what I have heard and know about Premier Stalin, I am confident that the

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Russian leader would not countenance or condone such action in one of his country's Embassies.

With views such as this influencing the perception of post–World War II realities by allied leaders, it is difficult to resist the notion that Providence played a benevolent role in directing the outcome of Western and American foreign policy. But the inhabitants of the Baltic and East European states must have bitterly wondered why He did not extend his protection to them.

There are other puzzling phenomena that Antonov-Ovseyenko clarifies in heartrending detail. Why did innocent men and women confess to deeds that they could not possibly have committed and fabricate, at the instigation of their interrogators, fantastic tales involving other completely innocent persons? After reading this book no one can doubt that it was torture, actual and threatened, to themselves and their loved ones that explains the confessions—torture both brutal and refined, sustained until the victim capitulated or collapsed. Even so, many unsung and until now unhonored heroes withstood this torture. Some survived. But the great majority yielded. The extraction of confessions became a fine art. Interrogators vied with each other in the achievement of results. In addition, "an investigator earned a bonus of two thousand rubles for each confession." Sadism became a well-paid habit.

Here we also have an explanation of why Khrushchev's program of destalinization was stopped in its tracks. It was not because, after Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, the Soviet presses were overwhelmed by a Niagara of personal memoirs of similar and worse days. Rather it was because destalinization, if continued, would have required the exposure, if not the punishment, of at least a half-million officials and bureaucrats, great and small, who conscientiously and often enthusiastically had participated in the destruction of the innocent. Torture had become a way of life for so many that the only thing that mattered to them was survival and the natural fear that they would meet the fate of Lavrenti Beria, who, after Stalin, was the head of the apparatus of repression. It is clear that genuine repentance had not moved Khru-

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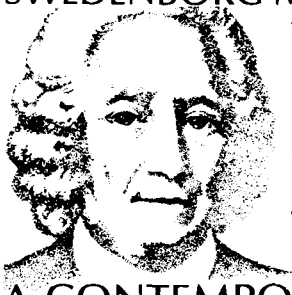

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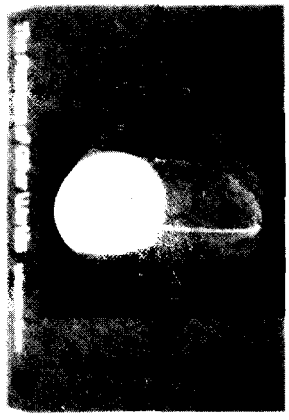

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shchev to make his revelations before the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist party; rather, it was the necessity of outmaneuvering Georgi Malenkov, Vyacheslav Molotov, and the other hard-liners. In the apocryphal pages of *Khrushchev Remembers*, the former premier writes, "It would have been better to tell everything. Murder will always out." Antonov-Ovseyenko laments that murder is not yet out in the Soviet Union, that its perpetrators sit enthroned in comfort. "Ignorance can be criminal but unpunished crime is doubly criminal. There is no adequate punishment for the fanatical bigotry and cruelty of the Stalinschina, but at least Stalin's thugs should not be left in comfort, prosperity, and obscurity. The butchers of Ravensburg, Auschwitz, and Dachau have been punished. Why haven't the butchers of Solovki, Kolyma, and Bamlag ever been named? I'm not asking for punishment. Simply that their names be published."

Even the most sympathetic reader will not fail to note that Antonov-Ovseyenko's answers to some of the key questions he poses are hardly adequate. If Stalin was such a monstrous and corrupt creature even before he schemed his way into power, how was it that his closest comrades, especially Lenin, did not recognize the true lineaments of his character? Consummate artistry on Stalin's part? Hardly. He did not conceal his rudeness from Lenin, but neither Lenin nor Trotsky nor any of Stalin's future victims discerned the bloodthirsty lust for total power behind the smiling mask. Antonov-Ovseyenko treats Lenin's responsibility for Stalin very gingerly. In one place he recognizes that "Lenin's doctrine of the dictatorship of the proletariat contributed to the usurpation of power by a dictator more than anything else." But he is silent about the dictatorial methods that Lenin himself employed against non-Communists. It was not simply the belief in the dictatorship of the proletariat—which can be construed as it was by Friedrich Engels and others as referring to the economic program of a legally and democratically elected government of the entire population—that constituted the poisoned premise from which the theorems of totalitarianism were derived. It was Lenin's dogma, shared equally by Trotsky and Stalin, that the dictatorship of the proletariat could be exercised only through the dictatorship of the minority Communist party *over* the proletariat and the entire population which set in train the fearful consequences.

Nor have we an adequate explanation of why Stalin spared such figures as Tarlé, Maisky, Pavlov, Jaffe, and Litvinov, who by history and conviction were further removed from him than many of his victims. Antonov-Ovseyenko opines that Stalin thought they could be useful for his purposes. But thousands of those he sent to their cruel deaths were potentially of greater use to him.

One crucial question Antonov-Ovseyenko does not discuss at all. Why in the light of Stalin's oppressive terror was there no organized opposition to him? Why no effort by colleagues, friends, and admirers of those Stalin crushed to overthrow him instead of passively waiting their turn to be liquidated? After all, Hitler's domestic regime was not as oppressive to the majority of his subjects as Stalin's was to the great mass of Soviet peasants and workers. Yet there were plots against Hitler and at least one failed effort. But there is no objective evidence of any movement directed against Stalin. The notion that Stalin "had to play rough" because there was a conspiracy against him—the line handed out by spokesmen for the Kremlin to soothe the sensibilities of their supporters abroad who were shocked by wholesale murder—is properly dismissed by Antonov-Ovseyenko as "unholy nonsense." Granted—but why no opposition despite the century-old traditions of revolutionary opposition to despotism?

The only plausible explanation I have heard came from General Walter Krivitsky of Soviet military intelligence, who defected to the West in the late 1930s. He told me that the government, through the secret police, organized its own opposition. It recruited tens of thousands of agents and informers who were sent out into the population. Like magnets attracting steel filings, these individuals attracted all elements who for one reason or another were discontented and critical. Periodically they were gathered in. Most of them were severely punished. Many rendered contrite by the magnanimity of the government—which promised to suspend punishment, subject to their future behavior—willingly accepted the role of magnet of other dissidents.

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Under such circumstances it is hard to see how a genuine opposition movement could be organized. Even the apparently spontaneous expression of dissatisfaction by a person's fellow worker could be a provocation. Safety could only lie in denouncing him.

Today in the Soviet Union the worst of Stalin's excesses have been limited; the concentration camps still exist, but not on such a vast scale. Refinements of torture have been introduced that escaped Stalin's ingenuity: sentencing dissidents to insane asylums where they are demoralized by drugs, for example. The system that spawned Stalin is still intact. Although it is improbable that the Stalinschina will recur in the same form, it is not precluded that something similar—or worse—may still arise in the future. The prospects of a democratic revolution from below are bleak. Perhaps if there is a falling-out among Leonid Brezhnev's successors, one of the contenders for popular support may seek to liberalize the system from above. But whatever happens, it will have little to do with Marx's conception of a free and classless society.

The Last Tory

THE STRETCHFORD CHRONICLES: 25 YEARS OF PETER SIMPLE. *Introduction by Kingsley Amis. Daily Telegraph Publications, London. £6.75.*

Reviewed by JOHN O'SULLIVAN

I sometimes have a fantasy about a sociological research project entitled *Aggression, Anxiety, Indifference, Amusement, and Hysteria: Patterns of Facial Reaction on the London Underground During the Morning Rush Hour, 1955–1980* (Void University Press, $60.00). (Of course, things being what they are, this fantasy is doubtless fact by now.) On assessing his fieldwork findings, the psychosociologist would not be especially puzzled to discover that amusement was much less prevalent on Monday mornings—4.7 degrees below the mean on the Rictus Scale—compared to Tuesday through Friday. And he might

JOHN O'SULLIVAN is the editor of *Policy Review*.

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even think that he could guess the reason. But he would be perplexed by the remarkably high correlation between mirth (both open and suppressed) and possession of the *Daily Telegraph* on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.

That would be no mystery to readers and admirers of the newspaper's resident satirist, Peter Simple. Monday is the Master's day off. For the rest of the workaday week, our morning is brightened beyond belief by what Kingsley Amis, in a grateful introduction to this selection of Simple's columns, calls a "treasure-house of truth, fantasy and wit." How often one's depression at an outbreak of particularly ghastly news—the giving of the Nobel Peace Prize to a retired terrorist, for example—is dispelled by Peter Simple's mockery, expressed either in direct criticism or transformed by imagination into comic absurdity. For a moment, as Mr. Amis remarks, "it seems as if They can never win."

The world Simple thus creates, in about four items per day with a combined total of nine hundred words, is indescribably rich and varied. The best that a reviewer can do by way of explanation is to introduce a few of its inhabitants.

There is Dr. Spaceley-Trellis, the go-ahead Bishop of Bevindon, author of "God the Humanist," resplendent in his Swedish-designed see-through miter, who takes the view that God should "make way for a younger man"; President Ngrafta of Gombola, formerly Gomboland, the only practicing witch doctor who has a degree from the London School of Economics; Dr. Heinz Kiosk, the psychopenologist, Psychiatric Adviser to the South East London Gas Board and, subsequently, to the National Eccles Cake Board, who interprets Mr. Enoch Powell's unapologetic conservative speeches as "a cry for help"; the nineteenth-century Russian revolutionaries Sekonalov, Benzedrinov, Phanerganov, the dialectical spiritualist Prince Alexei Dexedrinov and, of course, Nembutalov himself; Mrs. Elvira Mutcliffe, the Cleckheaton-born diseuse and devotee of eurythmic dancing, who runs a highly successful black magic coven where Satan usually puts in an appearance and drinks a glass of nonalcoholic elderberry wine; the Department of Theoretical and Applied Squatting at Stretchford University; Harry and Janet Nodule, the traffic jam fans; Mrs. Dutt-Pauker, the Hampstead thinker, whose name was once romantically linked with that of Walter Ulbricht and whose homes include Beria Garth in Dorset and Leninmore in the West of Ireland; her grandson, the bearded Bert Brecht Mao Odinga Dutt-Pauker, whose "birth was televised on close circuit television and watched by a large invited audience," an apostle of "Infant Power," though under the watchful care of the Albanian au pair girl, Gjoq; Julian Birdbath, the literary critic and author of the first avant-garde novel about football, *The Disconnected Goalposts;* the Stretchford Municipal Symphony Orchestra (conducted by Sir Jim Gastropodi); King Norman the Good, Fourth of the House of Slough, blue-suited, conscientious, smiling with egalitarian dentures, and other members of the Royal Socialist Family such as the Queen Gran, Princess Shirley, and Duke Len of Erdington; Sir Herbert Trance, Chairman of the British Boring Board of Control, who is trying to arrange an international contest between Grant Coma, Jr., of the U.S.A. and Israel's Shloime Ben Chloroform; General Sir Frederick ("Tiger") Nidgett, former head of the Royal Army Tailoring Corps; and an eminent American, Ms. Marylou Ogreburg, of Dissentville, California, one of the famous "Grand Rapids Sixteen," who leads the visiting Marylou Ogreburg Multi-racial Bread and Marmite People's Street Theatre. Into this world occasionally stray figures from our own less colorful terrain. I seem to recall—the incident is not in this collection—Sir Herbert Trance talking admiringly of an up-and-coming American bore, Vice-President Mondale by name, of (and from) whom a great deal more would undoubtedly be heard.

Simply to describe this extraordinary menagerie is to make clear that Peter Simple is no optimistic liberal. His list of dislikes would certainly have to include, in prominent positions, such progressive figures as sociologists, female liberationists, economic planners, bureaucrats of every stripe, Labour politicians, the United Nations (or, in Peter Simplistic language, the great lie factory), modern artists—the more experimental, the worse for them—psychiatrists, fashionable terrorists, the Race Relations Industry (a phrase which,

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along with Rentacrowd, he has introduced into everyday English), and many, many more.

But Simple is no party man. He is an enemy of Progress in all its guises. If anything, the conservative version of the heresy provokes him to especially savage howls of rage and disappointment. Nadirco Enterprises, Ltd., the giant conglomerate running everything from foodaramas to striptease clubs without regard to any principle other than money, is one of his most sinister inventions; Jeremy Cardhouse, M.P., leader of Tories for Progress, blown by every gust of political fashion, and an illustration of Burke's remark that "ambition can creep as well as soar," is perhaps the most contemptible butt in the column. Simple regularly laments: the onrush of steel and concrete, new airports, more motorways, greater output of cars, programs of electrification with pylons striding across the countryside; "the Heathian reforms of local government" by which "historic counties were wiped off the map or carved into bogus new areas reflecting only the vacuity and rootlessness of statisticians and businessmen"; and, worst of all, the horrible irony whereby a place of great natural beauty, mysterious and impressive, is transformed into a hideous "amenity" with car parks and hostels sited at convenient intervals.

Underneath both the comedy and the polemic, however, there can often be heard an elegiac strain. Peter Simple does not expect actually to defeat Progress; accordingly, he has little hope that the causes he champions will prosper. The triumph of the calico millennium seems unstoppable. But, in some words of his also quoted by Mr. Amis, "What decent man ever refused to fight for a good cause because he knew it was a lost one?" Since most people scurry eventually to the winning side, the column has few heroes—Colonel Charles Waldo Sibthorp, the nineteenth-century member of Parliament for Lincoln who "indefatigably attacked industrialism, the factory system, railways and Free Trade" and who had the habit "of crowing like a cock when bored by Manchester radicals"; Mr. Enoch Powell, the lost leader of the Tory Right; and, most notably in recent years, the White Rhodesians. His defense of the

EQUAL RIGHTS: The Male Stake

Leo Kanowitz

University of New Mexico Press
Albuquerque,
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Leo Kanowitz's *Women and the Law: The Unfinished Revolution* (1969) virtually created the legal discipline of sex discrimination and the law. This new book is a compilation of his essays written between 1970 and 1980—many of them specifically for this volume—on a variety of topics relating to the equal rights movement. The overriding concerns of the book are the issue of benign sex discrimination and the idea that the movement for equal rights before the law must be understood as a movement for *human* rights, not just women's rights.

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cause of White Rhodesia, ill represented in this selection, included some of his finest polemic and was quite free of any false optimism. He frequently predicted that they would be half tricked, half bullied into agreeing to their own surrender—a tribute to the predictive power of defeatism. They nonetheless appealed to him as a romantically modest cause, "peaceful, prosperous, and quite reasonably content with their imperfect, unfashionable, paternalistic system," assailed from all sides by lies, hypocrisy, and, in the end, terrorism, yet maintaining their fundamental decency, Bournemouth holding the world at bay.

Could liberals possibly find such a reactionary diehard funny? The evidence from reviews by accredited English leftists is that they do. They must sometimes laugh through gritted teeth, but it perhaps eases their consciences that in recent years the balance of the column has shifted slightly from polemic and directly political satire to social and literary fantasy. This has been at least partly caused by the proven capacity of the real world to outdistance satire. No sooner does Peter Simple have some fictional sociologist identify the evil of "heightism" than a real sociologist in California denounces it too. And how could Dr. Spaceley-Trellis outdo the World Council of Churches?

Yet here is a further paradox. Some of the social fantasies—in particular, those built around the fictional Midlands towns of Nerdley and Stretchford—give a wildly truthful picture of modern England. Not, of course, the England of beefeaters, thatched cottages, winding country lanes, and the English Tourist Board, but the England of vandalized telephone boxes, of bleak housing estates bereft of pubs and small corner shops, of monster bargain offers in the local Nadirco supermarket. There is, for example, the saga of Mrs. Brenda O'Gourke, forty-six, housewife, of Termite Road, Nerdley, accused of dishonestly handling fifty-one pork pies, who claimed under questioning to be carrying out an independent survey of pork pie contents since a friend of hers had recently found a long rambling letter, possibly an appeal for help, in one. There is Stretchford's lovely sex-maniac-haunted Sadcake Park where Mr. R. D. Viswaswami, an immigrant naked sadhu, is employed by the local council to live in a specially built hermit's cave made of artificial stone and has the status of environmental amenity officer (grade three).

Stretchford also contains both the Our Jackie Kennedy Fan Club and its rival the Our Christina Onassis Fan Club, both composed of typical housewives who take a fierce interest in these jet-set disputes. (It should be explained that several typical Stretchford housewives claim to have had affairs with John F. Kennedy.) Meanwhile in Nerdley, the Victoria Road Library has been occupied by a group of sociology students, describing themselves as the Aztec Liberation Front. As Aztecs they demand compensation for the wrongs done to an early Aztec colony on the site of the library and the withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland. This is a serious matter because the library is almost certainly the venue for readings by the pop poets of "the Nerdley Scene"—Julian Macnumb, Jim O'Vacancy, Rodrigo Otiose, and others—whose influences include cracker mottoes, quick repartee heard in local authority homes for the deaf and dumb, and puns and jokes based on memories of TV commercials.

Unlikely though it may seem to Americans, these fantastic events evoke in the mind of an English reader strong sensations of familiarity and recognition. They are the distilled flavor of real events, places, and people in lawless comic form. Who has not met a Royston Vibes, leader of the Aztec sociologists, or read a magistrate's strictures on a Mrs. O'Gourke, or quickly failed to pick up a paperback collection by a Julian Macnumb?

If American readers doubt this, let them turn to the literary fantasies where comparison with the real thing is easier and more practicable. I will bet that they find them instantly recognizable and, within the bounds of fantasy, truthful too. There are Simple's parodies—like Hemingway's account of a visit to Bournemouth where, recuperating in a bath chair after his liberation of Paris, he encountered rival invalids: " 'They fought good,' he said ruminatively scratching his chest. 'But I fought gooder. They died good. I quess the whole goddam town was at the funeral.' " His satirical assaults on the counterfeit arts now in fashion are somewhat fiercer. Jean-Paul Bour-

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don, for instance, the most controversial film director alive, who won the World Boring Authority's award for the best film of the year with his controversial *De Gaulle Is a Woman*, discusses his latest film *Zero Minus Zero*, which includes a scene in which a group of typical Conservative women in flowered hats, some of them on fire, sit drinking tea at a large table on which is spread a disemboweled horse. "All purpose is immediacy," he explains. "Function is representation. A film is a statement, an act, a state. The message is in the function. Life is what you make it. Time is money. The customer is always right. . . ." And there are nostalgic memories of Dylan Thomas cadging loans and vomiting; discoveries like Julian Birdbath's detection of a fourth Brontë sister, Doreen, whose sociological study of child-rearing patterns in a West Riding community, Wuthering Heights, was for so long unjustly neglected; a rebellion by Thomas Hardy's characters against the cruel fates inflicted on them by their Creator dressed up as destiny; and. . .

But I hear the interjection: Sir, you have delighted us enough. Not for me, then, to trace the literary antecedents of the Master, to point to the comic names in Dickens or Peacock's Steam Intellect Society. I will simply say what is perhaps already apparent—that I find Peter Simple one of the funniest writers in the English language. Those who have not read him, which surely means most Americans among others, must have that Monday morning feeling all week.

Up Front from Down Under

UNRELIABLE MEMOIRS. *By Clive James. Knopf. $10.*

Reviewed by PETER SHAW

In this laconic, closely observed recollection of youth, the English book and television critic, Clive James, accomplishes something rather different from what either he or his American reviewers have stressed. Its account

PETER SHAW is the author of *American Patriots and the Rituals of Revolution*, published by Harvard University Press.

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The Kent State University Press
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of growing up in Australia has been called "winning" and "charming," while Clive James himself characterizes it as a semifictional exploration into the ambiguities of memory. Both the charm and the ambiguities are there, but it seems to me that, if anything, they interfere with the more considerable achievement of revealing some hidden truths about childhood.

Clive James grew up in a new, lower-middle-income, working-class suburb of Sydney. He describes the neat little squares of lawn in front of the houses and the narrow driveways separating them—which are curiosities for his English audience, though perfectly familiar to Americans. Familiar, too, is the culturally deprived atmosphere that can be found in such a suburb. The church was perhaps a bit more stifling than one in America at the same period—the 1940s—but the movies and comics were the same, and the unsupervised street and backyard life of the neighborhood children was similar.

James was forced back on his own resources to a greater extent than the other children because of his father's absence while serving in the Pacific war—an absence made permanent in 1945 when his father was killed in an airplane crash on the way home after the Japanese surrender. *Unreliable Memoirs* takes its special quality from the unsentimental way in which it recaptures the raw need for friendship of a fatherless, physically underdeveloped boy. In order to get along with his playmates and to avoid being victimized, James became capable of childish brutalities that could completely override the promptings of kindness and morality. At one point, for example, he reasoned that the surest way to achieve popularity in school was to get himself caned by the principal, and so he contrived to strike an unsuspecting girl a vicious blow on the head during recess.

The needs of the boy's body are shown to have been equally absolute. For years, until he was cured by an operation, the rhythm of his life was determined by the discomforts and illnesses caused by his body's nearly constant flow of phlegm. As a preadolescent he participated in group sexual experiments, partly out of awakening physical need and partly out of the continuing need to belong. James's capacity for reproducing the sexually affectless details of these gropings recalls Henry Miller (whose childhood revelations, however, had more to do with cruelty than with sex). In one of Miller's books, when he meets a boyhood friend and recalls for him their involvement in the bloody stoning of a neighborhood boy, the friend responds with a blank stare of denial. One is reminded that the natural tendency to repress unpleasant memories leaves very few with the ability to write truthfully about childhood.

Unfortunately, James undercuts his success in this regard by playing somewhat loosely with the notion of unreliability. Toward the end of the book he seems suddenly to have recalled his title and tries to justify it. After telling about a college classmate whom he admired, he remarks surprisingly that "it will be apparent that I am talking about the kind of brother I would have liked to have." And after telling about his first lovemaking, he adds disconcertingly, "And you can stop thinking that she's a figment of my imagination. Of course she is." Finally, James remarks that the book itself is his second "full-length fictional work."

For James, it seems, "fiction" comes into being whenever a writer offers anything less than the disreputable truth about himself. "My ideal of autobiography has been set by Alfieri," he writes, "whose description of a duel he once fought in Hyde Park is mainly concerned with how he ran backwards to safety." To the extent that he has failed to meet this "standard of honesty," James implies, he has been unreliable and hence fictitious. In fact, James's tendency is less toward the avoidance than the cultivation of the disreputable—and it is just here that the charm of *Unreliable Memoirs* becomes a problem.

James seeks to be amusing about his childhood through the use of comic exaggeration. He describes playing on an Annapurna dirt hill; causing a Thermopylae of ants; hearing a Battle of Britain sound of children's carts; seeing a penile erection "the size of a Japanese midget submarine"; suffering a verbal tirade like an atomic attack; and attending a movie program as lengthy as Bayreuth. These comparisons are apparently meant to be regarded as a second kind of fiction—the writer's imaginative approximation of the truth.

Only the use of Bayreuth strikes me as really funny, for the reason that it says something about both the movies and Wagnerian

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opera. The other comparisons may achieve charm, but they lack true wit. In each case, I would guess, James is using language to avoid rather than confront his experience. Elsewhere he makes it clear that the loss of his father as a result of the war was the crucial event of his life, yet he never expands on the matter. In his exaggerations, though, his father's presence returns unbidden in the form of an unconscious tendency to resort to the military—battles, submarines—when making comic exaggerations.

The military tendency eventually becomes problematic. Thus, after describing a group of boys in college whom he worships because of their self-assurance, James adds, "Doubtless I would have warmed to the *Waffen* SS for the same reason." The remark is again lightly tossed off as an approximation of childhood's amorality. Yet the boy is at this point a good deal older than the morally unformed child who struck the girl. Furthermore, that early cruel deed actually reflected a nascent morality, for it showed a self-sacrificing solidarity with the other boys against the stifling authority of their schoolmasters.

James's ability to be unsparing of his former self, then, is undercut when he uses the idea of fiction to avoid the less shocking but personally disturbing truths about himself. But under any circumstances, the notion of unreliability that he is talking about would hardly be convincing since it is characteristic of all memory. Legal witnesses, after all, are notoriously unreliable, yet are trusted enough so that people are sent to jail on the strength of their accounts. Any kind of writing can be described as being unreliable, yet readers have always sensed, and sensed correctly, that some written accounts are less unreliable than others. One suspects that if James were writing as a book reviewer, where his prose and his analytic approach are always admirably straightforward, he would probably be the first to object to his own use of the word "unreliable."

James needed to look deeper within than he did in his memoir, especially in the case of his SS comparison. In autobiography, a life must be interpreted as well as rendered. Insofar as *Unreliable Memoirs* resorts to wit and charm in the place of interpretation, it proves to be unreliable in a sense quite different from that intended.

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The Reader Replies

Coolidge and the Historians

Thomas B. Silver's essay "Coolidge and the Historians" (Autumn 1981) is a thoughtful and in some respects welcome reevaluation of a too often caricatured president. As Silver demonstrates, the standard portrait of a "dour," "unimaginative," and "lazy" leader does little justice to Coolidge as man or president. Coolidge *was* a more dedicated and capable public servant than Samuel Eliot Morison or Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.—leading purveyors of Coolidge scholarship that Silver so deplores—suggest.

Nonetheless, it seems fair to ask whether the standard interpretations of Coolidge really distort the substance of his presidency. Nowhere in Silver's analysis does he address the *policies* that Coolidge pursued during his five-and-a-half-year tenure in the White House. On examination, these policies signified precisely the business favoritism and hostility to government action on behalf of the general public that Schlesinger and others have highlighted. To wit: under Coolidge, the federal government's relationship to the business community went beyond simple assistance to active partnership. This is evidenced not only in Coolidge's appointments to the Cabinet and the major regulatory commissions—conservative businessmen almost to a man—but also in the thrust of the administration's economic policies. Under the president's benign leadership, inheritance taxes were cut in half and businesses throughout the nation received subsidies and tax abatements, while struggling farmers, and the two-thirds of the nation's families with an income below $2,500 were treated to homilies about the virtues of free enterprise. Under Coolidge, the antitrust division of the Justice Department was instructed to direct its resources and energies, not to investigating and curbing abuses in the business community, but rather to crack down on labor unions. The Internal Revenue Service was discouraged from pursuing tax evaders and directed by Secretary of the Treasury Andrew Mellon—one of the richest men in the country—to provide him with a list of loopholes applicable to his tax needs. Three million dollars that would otherwise have gone into the federal treasury remained as a result in the Mellon coffers.

Of course, such policies were justified, as similar ones are today, on the grounds that minimal regulation would unleash American enterprise, encourage business investment and efficiency, and hence reduce the costs of production. Lower production costs presumably would mean lower prices, increased sales—and greater prosperity for all. What Coolidge did not count on was that businesses, enjoying burgeoning profits, would decline either to pass on some of these profits to their employees in the form of higher wages or to lower the prices of their goods. Instead, American entrepreneurs relied on the hard sell, increased advertising, and the large-scale extension of consumer credit to stimulate sales. The resulting credit crunch was a major factor contributing to the depression that began in earnest less than a year following Coolidge's departure from office.

None of this justifies a distortion of the words and character of Calvin Coolidge. He was a decent and amiable man, and he meant well. But as we appreciate his personal virtues, it remains useful to acknowledge that Coolidge's policies were not, in retrospect, a boon to the country. To those who wish today to revive the Coolidge policies, one can only urge caution—and, perhaps, another glance at the histories that Mr. Silver takes pains to discredit.

Michael Birkner
Hanover, New Hampshire

Thomas B. Silver replies: Mr. Birkner makes a sound point, namely, that we know a statesman not only through his speeches but also through his deeds. And in fact my article did leave open the possibility that Coolidge was a hypocrite, who preached one thing and practiced its opposite.

But my article was only a part of a larger work, now in progress, soon to be completed. In that larger work I take up several of the most prominent

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political controversies of the twenties, as they are presented in the history books. I can here only assert what I there prove: historians like Arthur Schlesinger give a one-sided account of those controversies. For example, Schlesinger—and every other historian of my acquaintance—asserts that Coolidge and Mellon preached and practiced a shifting of the federal tax burden from the wealthy to the poor. The exact opposite is true. Although tax rates were reduced in the twenties (for rich and poor alike), the effect of this reduction was, paradoxically, to *increase* taxes on the rich both absolutely and as a percentage of the federal tax burden as a whole. By the time Coolidge left office, people of low and moderate incomes paid virtually no federal income tax. The entire burden was borne by the wealthy and by corporations.

Mr. Birkner's letter contains several errors. For example, he says that "Coolidge's appointments to the Cabinet and the major regulatory commissions" were "conservative businessmen *almost to a man.*" (Emphasis mine.) In fact, among Coolidge's appointees to the Cabinet were the president of an agricultural college, the dean of a law school, a United States senator, a judge, and a lawyer.

Mr. Birkner writes:

> The Internal Revenue Service was discouraged from pursuing tax evaders, and directed by Secretary of the Treasury Andrew Mellon—one of the richest men in the country—to provide him with a list of loopholes applicable to his tax needs. Three million dollars that would otherwise have gone into the federal treasury remained as a result in the Mellon coffers.

1. The Internal Revenue Service under Mellon was zealous in assessing additional payments on individuals and corporations who had understated their taxes due the federal government. These additional assessments *exceeded* the refunds awarded by the IRS.

2. Mellon was prosecuted for underpayment of the tax on his 1931 income. But (a) the list of (legal) loopholes requested by Mellon in 1923 had nothing to do with the main issues in this prosecution, and (b) Mellon in the end was assessed an additional $485,000 (not "three million dollars") on his 1931 income tax.

It is a commonplace of the history books that farmers were oppressed in the twenties. In truth, farmers in the twenties were given an agricultural tariff, tax reduction, regulation of the meat-packing industry, exemption from antitrust laws, internal improvements to lower transportation costs, subsidized fertilizer, and other forms of government assistance. The main thing that farmers did not get was something they should not have had, the McNary-Haugen bill, which was twice vetoed by Coolidge.

The greatest barrier to a clear view of the twenties is the Great Depression. The standard accounts, which Mr. Birkner follows, tell us that the seeds of that disaster were planted by Calvin Coolidge. I say: no longer is anyone entitled to hold this view who has not given the most serious attention to the monetary studies of Friedman and Schwartz. Friedman and Schwartz show that monetary policy was moderate and steady during most of the twenties, and became disastrously deflationary only after October 1930. The Great Depression, in their view, was the fault not of Mr. Coolidge but of the Federal Reserve.

The Perfect Blendship

At the risk of seeming ungrateful for a friendly and generous review in the Autumn 1981 AMERICAN SCHOLAR of my latest book, *Sex and Sensibility: Ideal and Erotic Love from Milton to Mozart*, I must correct a few erroneous or ambiguous assertions. Professor G. S. Rousseau must momentarily have had some other book in mind when he wrote that my chapter on Dryden pays "attention to only one play—*All for Love.*" I discuss at some length no less than eight plays of Dryden and take some notice of at least six more. I surely cannot be said to argue that "sex was first presented to literate Englishmen ... in *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes*," a preposterous idea which I have never held and which indeed I tried to obviate by discussing Plato, Virgil, Ovid, Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakespeare. Professor Rousseau is right in seeing that in my view Milton is a pioneer and an exemplar; he is also the writer who gives me the very terms of my argument. But I do not wish the impression left that Milton presented only idealized love and sexuality: I emphasize what I call the narcissistic sins, not only in Milton's vivid presentation of them but also in much of the subsequent literature. Professor Rousseau begins his review by saying that Anders Nygren, Denis de Rougemont, and Irving Singer have "explicated the high life and low tumble of sexuality" in the eighteenth century. They have not, and nothing that I have written says or implies as much.

JEAN H. HAGSTRUM
John C. Shaffer Professor Emeritus
of English and Humanities
Northwestern University
Evanston, Illinois

G. S. ROUSSEAU replies: I regret that Professor Hagstrum has found some of the statements in my review ambiguous or erroneous, especially since I continue to think so highly of *Sex and Sensibility* and praise it to colleagues and students. Professor

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Hagstrum is positively right to insist that he discussed several of Dryden's plays in chapter 3, and I ought not to have said that he discussed one play. The other points raised by Professor Hagstrum deal with the origins of ideas in literary and intellectual history, and in this category I suspect that Professor Hagstrum and I may speak different languages. But surely these are minor quibbles and reservations. What counts far more is that Professor Hagstrum has isolated two rather neglected aspects—sex and sensibility—of one of the most fascinating periods of European literature (1600–1800), and has written a very good book that will be read for a long time.

Charles Doughty—Man and Book

In his recent book *The Geography of the Imagination*, Guy Davenport indignantly declares, "There is Charles Doughty whom entire departments of literature university after university have not read, a state of affairs roughly analogous to a department of physics sublimely ignorant of Proteus Steinmetz." A day after I read this, your Autumn 1981 issue arrived with the article on Charles Doughty by Ruth Gay. While this does not free departments of literature from Mr. Davenport's excoriations, the fact that THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR and Mrs. Gay are indirectly associated with universities may help him look more kindly on these institutions.

It is pertinent that Laura "Riding" Jackson, her late husband, Schuyler Jackson, and Robert Graves have praised *Travels in Arabia Deserta* and *The Dawn in England*, considering Charles Doughty a writer of significance.

THEODORE WILENTZ
Chevy Chase, Maryland

Revolution in Extremis

For the first time in my scholarly career I feel that I must comment on a reviewer's characterization of my work. Robert Leiter's review of my book, *Sergei Nechaev*, in the Winter 1981/82 issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, does me and the scholarly community a disservice by misrepresenting my position on the nature of the Russian revolutionary movement, and by failing to assess accurately my contribution compared to that of other scholars. From everything that I could gather from the review, Mr. Leiter does not do scholarship in this area and is neither a thorough nor fair reader.

PHILIP POMPER
Professor of History and Chairman
Wesleyan University
Middletown, Connecticut

ROBERT LEITER replies: Much of what Professor Pomper says is true. I do no scholarship in this or any other area and consider myself nothing more than a passionate Common Reader. If I have inadvertently Misrepresented the Professor or his book in any way I offer my apologies.

But there are several points that must be addressed. Professor Pomper says that I failed to assess accurately his contribution compared to that of other scholars. This is indisputably true; but it also seems something of a tall order to fill in a book review of twelve hundred words.

However, the Professor seems most angered by the fact that I am not a scholar. And by extension he appears to believe that books, especially those published by university presses, are the exclusive province of the scholarly community. All others need not apply. If this is so, if the opinions of dedicated readers and writers are valueless, then our culture is in deplorable shape.

As to the question of my thoroughness, I fail miserably here as well, if being thorough means reading in only one discipline. As for my fairness—that remains a matter of opinion.

And, in the end, we are simply arguing about opinions, which are notoriously ephemeral. Interested readers will always make their way to books.

SYMPOSIUM

The College of Humanities at The Ohio State University is pleased to announce an international symposium, "Africa and the West: The Challenge of African Humanism," to be held May 27–29, 1982. The conference is being convened to bring together outstanding scholars and noted public officials from Africa, Europe, and the United States to explore the nature of African humanism and to discuss its impact on relations among the emerging nations of Africa and within a larger world context. One of the working hypotheses of the conference will be the assumption that relations between Africa and the West should involve a mutually beneficial dialogue and not merely a one-way flow of technology and organizational structures from the West to Africa. Featured speakers will include Ali Mazrui (Professor of Political Science, University of Michigan), Philip Curtin (Professor of History, Johns Hopkins University), Taslim Elias (Vice-President, International Court of Justice, The Hague), and John Mbiti (Director of the Ecumenical Council of the World Council of Churches).

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THESE DISTINGUISHED VOICES SPEAK ON DANIEL HABERMAN'S POETRY

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"It is no surprise to find versions from *The Greek Anthology* at the heart of Daniel Haberman's collection: their treatment of love and loss and the natural world reminds us that when Haberman writes on these themes in his own deliberately crafted stanzas he is maintaining a tradition and working within modes of expression and feeling that remain vital and life-enhancing to this day." ***–SEAMUS HEANEY***

"I read with a great deal of pleasure these thoughtful and carefully made poems. Daniel Haberman has a restraint and a care for craftmanship which is very welcome these days. The translations which he has done in collaboration with Marylin B. Arthur are of particular interest in bringing before the reader some fragments of ancient Greek poetry which have only come to light in relatively recent times." ***–JOHN HEATH-STUBBS***

"Daniel Haberman's poems are delicate, sensitive, and intelligent; and I do sometimes remark with a touch of envy effects of his that are denied to me." ***–HOWARD NEMEROV***

"I have been reading Daniel Haberman's poems with pleasure. I am pleased, too, to find a younger poet with a sense of form, and a sense, too, that poetry has been going on for a long time and that anything new needs to grow out of the old. And it is good to know that someone has a sense of the enormous wealth of language available." ***–NORMAN NICHOLSON***

"Daniel Haberman is a poet in the tradition of Meredith, Tuckerman and Hardy—the influence of the latter is especially evident, beautifully and healthily so. This volume goes further than his first book, which won him a real following. All readers who enjoy lyric, singing verse that can touch the heart will enjoy, and be exhilarated by, these poems. ***–JAMES SCHUYLER***

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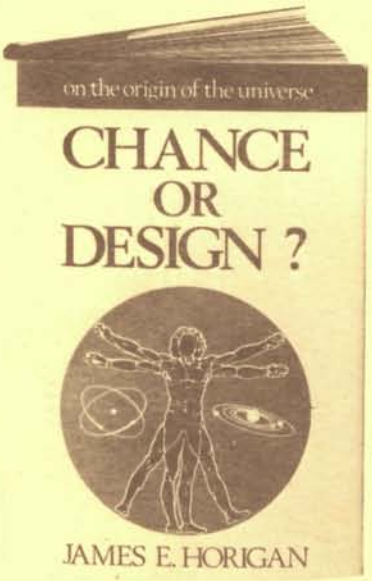

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